

AN
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EXHORTATION

TO THE
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INHABITANTS

Of the PROVINCE of
SOUTH-CAROLINA,

To bring their DEEDS to the Light of
CHRIST, in their own Consciences.

By S. H.

In which is inserted,

Some ACCOUNT of the AUTHOR's EX-
PERIENCE in the IMPORTANT BUSINESS of
RELIGION.

GOD, who commanded Light to shine out of Darknes; hath shined in our
Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of GOD in
the Face (or Appearance) of JESUS CHRIST, 2 COR. iv. 6.

We also believe, and therefore speak, 2 COR. iv. 13.

That which we have heard, which we have seen with our Eyes—and
our Hands have handled of the Word of Life, declare we unto you,
1 JOHN i. 1. 3.

B R I S T O L :

Printed by SAMUEL FARLEY, in Castle-Green,

M. DCC. L.

EXHIBITION
This Book Belongs to —
George Miller

1752

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Printed by S. Smith, in Pall Mall

AN EXHORTATION to the INHABITANTS of SOUTH-CAROLINA, &c.

My Friends and Neighbours,

AFTER an Absence of near six Years from this Province (my native Country) and my Arrival among you, I have beheld the Faces of many of the Inhabitants whom I have known, and been known to, some Years: But the Novelty of my religious Sentiments, and Meanness of my Appearance, has, I find, render'd me despicable in your Eyes; which has been obvious, when a Few of us, called *Quakers*, have met to worship the Supreme Being in a Manner agreeable to the best of our Understanding and Knowledge: And tho' some perhaps may stile our Principles * and Tenets by the hard Name of *Heresy*, and our Mode or Manner of Worship, ridiculous or absurd; nevertheless, we are humbly of Opinion, they are neither *unscriptural* nor *unchristian*, having, as we think, the Sanction and Authority of our LORD Himself, the Example of primitive Believers, and right Reason on our Side.

But notwithstanding, as I have noted, that I have suffered your ridicule and Reproach, as I am conscious it is for no other than obedience to the Will of my Heavenly Master, whose I am, and whom I serve, I am willing to become more vile in your Eyes; which, it is more than probable, I shall appear, when I expose the following Lines to your Observation and Censure. I would not have you imagine that any Consideration, less than his Favour, could have prevailed with me to have appeared thus publickly in Print, or otherwise; for could I, with any Ease to my own Mind, have evaded this, or been excused from returning to this Place (as I apprehended was required of me by the Almighty) you had never beheld my face in the Province, much less any Performance of this Sort in publick. I am not insensible, that the Reason I have offered for writing, as well as the Subject itself, may probably be consider'd as the Production of a distemper'd and enthusiastick Brain; as it is possible, on such a novel and uncommon Occasion, as a Woman's bearing on the Behalf of God and Religion, you may (as others have done in the like Circumstances) be induced to consider such an one under some unaccountable Delusion, or affected with religious madness; and more especially, as the Things recommended to your

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Any Person who desires to be informed of the Principles of the *Quakers*, is directed to Robert Barclay's Apology, since I find we are oftentimes condemn'd unjustly. But be that answereth a Matter before he heareth it, it is Folly and Shame to him. Prov. xviii. 13. The Apology may be had at Luke Hynde's, in George-Street, Grace-Church-Street, London.

Consideration, are offer'd by a simple Female of your own Country: Some, in this Case, I expect, will afford me a Smile of Contempt, while others (act'd by a more generous Passion) pity my Folly, and kindly wish me a Return of my Senses: But however this may be, I have considered, that from the earliest Ages of Christianity, and indeed in all preceeding Time, those who refused to conform to the Usage and wicked Customs of the Age, and lived a Self-denying Life, "Their Lives were counted Madness by the World, and their End to be without Honour:" Not considering that religious Minds despise and condemn all worldly Honour, and earthly Preferment, seeking that only which comes from God, and which He is pleased to distinguish those by, who honour Him (by walking in Conformity to his Laws and Precepts) as He Himself declares, *Those who honour me, I will honour; but those who despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.*

But before I proceed to what the Title-page mentions, I shall premise one Proposition, on which all I have to offer, will greatly depend, viz. *That all Mankind have a Measure and Manifestation of the Light, Spirit, or Grace of God, given them to profit withal.* This Doctrine of the universal Extent of the Grace of God, the People called *Quakers*, hold in a peculiar Manner, and are distinguished by, from some other dissenting Sects, who generally limit God's Gifts of his Holy Spirit, or saving Means, to what they call *The Elect*; and assert, that the rest of Mankind are (as they term it) *passed by*, or denied the Means of Salvation, being * predestinated from all Eternity to Destruction.

However, we say that this Gift of the Holy Spirit, or Grace of God, is bestowed on all Mankind without Exception, agreeable to the Assertion of the Apostle Paul; *The Grace of God, which brings Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness, and the World's Lusts, we should live righteously, soberly and godly in this present World.* But tho' all Men have received this Talent of Grace, or Manifestation of the Spirit of CHRIST, all are not saved, as Men may rebel against, or quench the Spirit; and, by frustrating its Motions, render it ineffectual. Under the Law it is said, *The Almighty gave of his good Spirit to the Jews to instruct them, but they rebelled against it, Nehemiah ix. 20.* And the Prophet *Isaiah* also tells us, *They rebelled, and vexed God's Holy Spirit.* And, under the Gospel, the Apostle Paul cautions the *Thessalonians* against *quenching the Spirit*, or extinguishing the Light, and hindering the consuming Force, that would destroy Sin and Iniquity in the Heart.

Thus, according to the Testimony I have offered, and many might produce, all Men have received a Proportion of Light and Grace, but all have not obey'd its Leadings; all have heard, but all have not obey'd: However, this internal Monitor or Director, ready on all Occasions (if we will apply to it for Knowledge and Help) to instruct us in our Duty, and assist us in overcoming the

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* To refute the Doctrine of Predestination, read Doctor *Whitby* on the New Testament; and his Discourses on the *Five Controverted Points*.

Temptations of the great Adversary of our Soul's Happiness; but we must diligently attend to its Voice, and not only hear, but obey its Instructions, that our Souls may live.

But some have said to me, *We grant that Christians ought to walk agreeable to the Dictates of the Spirit of CHRIST; but the Quakers make the Guidance and Direction of the Spirit necessary in trivial and indifferent Matters; nay, sometimes they offer its Dictates as a Reason for many Things accounted by us irrational and absurd.*—I answer; With Reference to our Duty and Obedience to the Almighty, I consider no Action indifferent; every Thing of this Nature must tend to some Purpose, good or evil: And 'tis upon this Consideration that we extend the Doctrine of the Cross, Self-denial, and perfect Obedience to the Precepts of CHRIST, farther than the Generality of those who profess the Christian Name: And I take this Occasion to say, my principal Errand among you, is to recommend, as far as I am enabled, these Christian Doctrines; since our LORD Himself positively declares, *That unless we take up a daily Cross,* (to our corrupt Wills and Affections) *we cannot be his Disciples:* And farther, to advise you to a strict Adherence to the Light or Grace of God in your own Consciences or Understandings, as unto a more sure Word of Prophecy, or perfect Director; *whereunto you will do well to take Heed, as unto a Light shining in a dark Place:* For the Nations of them that are saved, must walk in this Light of the LORD.

But it may be objected, "That many of the People called Quakers, have anciently bore Testimony to those Doctrines, and continue so to do; then what Need of my feeble Testimony or Evidence?" 'Tis true that numerous Pens have been employed, and many earnest Endeavours, and fervent Desires of this People, to recommend and propagate (as far as they are enabled by divine Assistance) those Christian Doctrines, which they have proved by their own happy Experience to be so beneficial and advantageous to themselves; and being thro' Grace made Partakers of that Charity or Love, which is the Bond of Perfection, and the Characteristick of a genuine and real Christian; these, I say, by this Gospel Love, are excited to wish well to all Mankind, and, as much as in them lies, they endeavour to serve one another in it, as the Apostle exhorts, *Gal. v. 13.* And their frequent Supplications ascend to the most High, on Behalf of Mankind in general, that all People may come to the Knowledge of the Truth, as it is in JESUS, and be saved. And when our Hearts are thus enlarged, both to God, and one towards another, then are our Mouths opened to declare of his wonderful Works to the Children of Men, and shew forth his mighty Acts, which he is able and ready to perform, by the powerful Operation of his Holy Spirit in our Hearts, in subduing every evil and inordinate Desire and Affection, and bringing them under his Government, and into Subjection to his divine Will; and by speaking well of his great Name, to invite and encourage others to *come, taste and see that the LORD is good,* and to partake of his Offer of great Salvation, no less than the Redemption of the Soul (by JESUS CHRIST) from the Bondage of Sin

Sin and Satan. And indeed the Peace that flows from, and the Promises annexed to, a perfect Obedience to the righteous Laws of God, are sufficient Inducements to excite us to a godly, righteous, and Self-denying Life; for as the royal *Psalmist* greatly experienced formerly, so we at this Day experience, and subscribe to this Truth, That in keeping the Commandments of God there is great Reward; and that great Peace have they who love his Law, and nothing shall offend them: *For He speaks Peace to his People, and to his Saints; but let them not turn again to Folly*, Psalm lxxxv. 8. *And the LORD will ordain Peace for the Righteous, for the Effect of Righteousness is Peace and Assurance for ever*, Isaiah xxxii. 17.

Agreeable to this our LORD tells his Disciples, *My Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you; not as the World giveth, but a Peace which passeth the Understanding of the carnal Man*. And the Apostle *Paul*, to encourage and excite the *Romans* to the Obedience of the Faith deliver'd, and a patient Continuance in Well-doing, tells them, Their Reward should be, *Glory, Honour and Peace, to every Man that worketh Good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile*, Rom. ii. 10.

But, on the contrary, that those who are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, Their Portion will be *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil*—as there is no Peace to the Wicked; for what have they to do with Peace, so long as they continue in Disobedience? Indeed the Wicked may, as they often do, cry Peace to themselves; when there is no Peace, or at least not a solid one; as a real and substantial Peace and Happiness, can only result from an Acquaintance with God, and the Testimony of a good Conscience: But a false and polluted Rest and Peace, which many are erecting to themselves, will destroy them with a fore Destruction, without timely Repentance and Amendment of Life; *for instead of this Peace, they shall have great Bitterness*, Isaiah xxxviii. 17.

Many and singular are the Advantages and Privileges which I might enumerate, that attend a Life of Piety and Holiness, no less than an Hundred-fold of Peace in our Bosoms in this Life, and the great and precious Promise of Life Eternal in the World to come. And as I have, by the Grace of God, and thro' Obedience of Faith, witnessed in Degree this Peace from God, (which is beyond the Conception of those who have never enjoyed it) I became greatly concerned for Mankind in general, and in a particular Manner for the Inhabitants of my native Country, that they might witness this Peace; and I often petitioned the Almighty, that He would in his wonted Mercy discover to you the Things that belong to your Soul's Peace, before they might, by Unbelief, be hid from your Eyes.

Having had this Concern for some Time on your Account, the Almighty was pleased to lay a Constraint upon me to declare it among you. This, and what follows, I am sensible will sound as idle and ridiculous Tales in the Ears of many; however, I shall go on to tell you, that I consider myself as a very feeble Instrument in the Cause of

of God, and one of the least Servants in my Master's House. I have also consider'd, how backward the Generality of People are to receive Advice, even when it has been offered by religious, pious and learned Men; and that the Labours of such have had but little Effect on the Minds and Conduct of many called Christians; and reflecting on the greatness of my Inability, as well as the Improbability of my being serviceable in God's Cause, I have been induced to say, LORD! *who will believe my Report, since so many have labour'd (as I have thought) in vain? Shall I, a poor Female, undertake for God? Can I presume to come up to his Help against the great Adversary of Souls? No surely; rather, I beseech Thee, appear in the Glory of thy Majesty, and by the immediate Act of thy mighty Power, in the Hearts of the People, subdue and lay waste the strong Holds of Sin and Satan! And in the Room thereof establish, I beseech Thee, the Kingdom and Dominion of thy dear Son, our LORD, whose Right alone it is to reign in the Hearts of the People, who is King of Kings, and LORD of Lords!* And farther, tho' I am but Dust and Ashes, I thus presumed to excuse myself; LORD, *I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast been pleased to discover thy Will to me.* But to an Almighty Power, who doth according to his righteous Will, both in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, who shall say, What dost thou? And since He is pleased to send by the Hand of whom He will send, I no longer resisted his Will, but became obedient to his Word and Power, against which I had long reasoned, and objected my Unfitness; tho' the Apostle Paul informs us, *That as many as have been baptiz'd into CHRIST (or with his Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost, and have witnessed the chaffy Nature in them consumed, and by this Means) have put on CHRIST (that then there is no Distinction or Difference among Christians in a religious Sense) there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither Bond nor Free, there is neither Male nor Female: For, says the Apostle, ye are all one in CHRIST JESUS.* Thus he seems to allow our Sex the same Gospel Privileges with the rest of Mankind. And the royal Prophet calls on the Female, as well as the Male Part of God's rational Creation, to celebrate the Praise of our common Governor and Benefactor. "Why then, says one, should Woman be denied her Canticle of Praise in the general Chorus, since out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings God will still ordain and perfect Praise?" And we may further observe, when the Tabernacle of the LORD was erected in the Wilderness, the Women, we are told, who were willing-hearted, brought their Free-will Offerings, and presented them towards the Building, or at least embellishing of this moveable Temple, which, 'tis said, was a Type of the true Church militant, and the Tabernacle which God has pitched, and not Man. And if Females were allowed to assist and contribute to the Work of the LORD, under the Law, why should any, or the least Essay towards the repairing the Breaches in God's Building, be rejected under the Gospel? since we do not offer or propose any new Doctrine, nor endeavour to lay any other Foundation than that which is already laid, viz. "The Revelation of the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST the Righteous,

• Righteous, in the Soul of Man, on which the Church of CHRIST is founded and built: Nor for the moral Disorders so visible amongst the Professors of Christianity, do we prescribe new or untry'd Remedies; but having experienced the Virtue and Efficacy of the old, we, in great Love and Good-will, endeavour to persuade you to apply them: For the same Fountain of Purgation is now open to Sinners, that was in Ages past set open for the House of *David*, and Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, for Sin and for Uncleaness; for the Almighty is not only the GOD of the *Jews*, but of the *Gentiles* also.

But to proceed; I have told you that this Voyage to my native Place, was undertaken in Pursuance of what I verily believed was the Will of GOD concerning me, and required of me by Him (I make no Doubt) as one amongst the many Trials I have been exercised with, of my Faith, Love and Obedience; wherein I believe it my Duty openly and freely to confess CHRIST before Men, whose operating Power on my Heart I had fearfully and cowardly endeavour'd to conceal before this Province; and I take this Occasion to declare to you, that I am not ashamed of the Gospel of CHRIST, which I have in Measure experienced to be the Power of GOD to Salvation to all them who believe, and continue to obey it; And the more numerous the Testimonies, and greater the Cloud of Witnesses, to the Efficacy of the Grace and Power of GOD, the more will the Truths and Evidences proposed and produced, be strengthen'd and corroborated. But some may possibly ask, "How I certainly know that I am not mistaken, and that instead of being led by the Spirit of Truth, I am not deceived by the Spirit of Error?" To such I answer; I have one Rule to square my Actions by, which never yet failed me, when I applied it; and that is, By Application to the Divine Being, that He would be pleased to preserve me from Error and Delusion. I examine by his Divine Light and Assistance, the Motive, Design, Tendency and End of my Actions; and if I find nothing repugnant to, or inconsistent with the Honour of GOD, and Scripture Precepts or Testimony, I make a rational Conclusion, that I am safe at least. And tho' I do not observe from Scripture, that it is my particular Duty to exhort you to yours; nor do I gather from thence, that I ought to declare, in this publick Manner, of the Goodness, Mercy and loving Kindness, of the Almighty, to all who seek his Face and Favour in Truth, Sincerity and Uprightness; yet I find it there, my Duty to obey all GOD's Commands; and that the Almighty may, and does, lay particular Injunctions; and special Commands, upon his Servants, by the Divine Direction of his Holy Spirit, at this Day, as well as in former Ages, I firmly believe: And that the Blessing our LORD promised to confer on his immediate Followers, extends as well to all his succeeding Disciples, *viz.*

"That he would pray the Father, and He will (says he) send you another Comforter, that may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, who will guide and lead you into all Truth, and shew you Things to come; for He that dwelleth with you, shall be in you; and

and this Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, shall teach you all Things, and bring all Things to your Remembrance."

And the Apostle *Peter*, at that memorable Time, when he was preaching to People of various Languages, tells his Audience, first quoting a Passage from the Prophet *Joel*, Acts ii. 38. *It shall come to pass in the last (or Gospel) Days, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all Flesh, and your Sons and your Daughters shall prophecy, &c.* And he subjoins, *Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of JESUS CHRIST, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost: For the Promise is to you, and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our GOD shall call. And to you, O Men, he calls, his Voice is to the Sons of Men, Prov. viii. 4.*

And we may further observe, That the Spirit of CHRIST was not limited to his immediate Disciples, to whom it was to be sent as a Comforter and Director; but He tells them, it should appear to the World of Unbelievers in another Administration or Office, *viz.* That of a Reprover for Sin. *For when CHRIST ascended up on high, He gave Gifts to Men, yea, even to the Rebellious, Eph. iv. 8.*

And the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, *Poole*, in his *Annotations*, tells us, "Was not, as some imagine, confined to the Apostles Days, but that Christians, in succeeding Ages, received as large Proportions of the Divine Influences and Gifts of the Holy Spirit as formerly."

And that Females did receive these Gifts, as well as the Men, and on proper Occasions did exercise them; *John Locke*, in his *Paraphrase* on *Paul's* Epistles, assures us, by Proof. He tells us, "That God, for Order sake, had instituted in the World a proper Subordination of the weaker Sex to the stronger; yet (says he) this hinder'd not but that he might make use of the weaker Sex to any Function, whenever he thought fit, as well as he did the Men." He says much more to the same Purpose; but I leave him to those who may have an Opportunity and Inclination to read him further on this Subject †; and return to illustrate, as well as I am able, the Rule of my Conduct in religious Matters.

I am sensible that it is my Duty, first and principally, and above all other Considerations, to love, adore, honour, and obey, the Supreme Being; and next, I find it my Duty to love my Neighbour as myself; and to observe to act in the same just and upright Manner in every Circumstance, that I desire he should act in towards myself: Therefore, if, upon a Scrutiny or Examination, I find my Design or Action directly or indirectly tending to the Dishonour of God, or in any Shape injurious to my Neighbour, I am immediately instructed, by the inward Monitor, or Light of CHRIST in my Conscience, to decline it; and if I forbear the Action, &c. I believe you will grant I am right so far. Again, if I apprehend I am directed or commanded to do any particular Thing; if, upon Trial, by the above Rule, it bears the Test, and has any Tendency to promote God's Honour, Peace, Good-will, Charity and Benevolence to my Neighbour,

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† *Locke* on 2 *Corinthians* 14.

bour, I believe I am safe, and may venture to conclude that this Suggestion can proceed from no other than God; since it points to some small Degree of Glory to his Name and Power. And further, any Deed that can stand this Trial, cannot possibly have its Rise, or be excited by a diabolical Spirit; since we have our LORD's Testimony to the Truth of this Assertion, *That if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an End*, Mark iii. 26.

But whatever Judgment may be made of my religious Sentiments and Conduct, it will be far from affecting me; my Peace and Happiness in no wise depending on the Favour or Applause of Mortals, but on the Favour and Approbation of God, by whose just and decisive Judgment I must stand or fall; for God seeth not as Man seeth, Man judging by the outward Appearance only; but the LORD looketh at the Heart. And tho' we are told, *The Heart is deceitful above all Things*; and the Prophet queries, *Who can know it?* the Almighty is pleased to declare, in these Words, *I the LORD search the Heart, and try the Reins; and behold he that formeth the Mountains, and createth the Spirit, He declareth unto Man what his Thoughts are: Even He that maketh the Morning Darkness, and treadeth upon the high Places of the Earth, the LORD, the God of Hosts is his Name*, Amos iv. 13.

Further; I have thought, you may possibly imagine, that in Pride and Arrogancy of Heart I am come to see, how you fare, with regard to your eternal Salvation: But give me Leave to assure you, my Visit proceeds from no such evil Motive; neither have I any further Views than the Peace and Satisfaction that flows from a Consciousness of having done my Duty, in coming to proclaim the glad Tidings of Peace and Salvation among you, to all who will accept of it on God's Terms, *viz. Repentance, and Amendment of Life*.

I have no particular Person in View, nor Design to offend any One living; and if at any time I should express myself a little warmly, my Zeal is aim'd against Sin, and the Irregularity of Peoples Lives in general; your Temporal, as well as Eternal Interest, I wish as well to, as I do to my own. I do not undertake to address you in pompous Words, nor, were it in my Power, to please your Ear with fine Periods. The Laws of Method I know little of, therefore I don't attempt any Rule of that Sort; neither do I presume to offer any Thing new on the Subject of Religion; but if one Line of my own short Experience in the Things of God, may have the least Tendency to excite some to the practical Part of Christianity, or to mend the Heart of any One, I have my Reward; my honest Aim, as far as my weak Endeavour will allow, being the Promotion of God's Honour, and the Welfare of my Neighbour; and, to borrow the Words of one of our Worthies, *I have no Plot or Design, but an ardent Wish for the Salvation of your Souls*: And, if I may be allowed to use the Words of the great Apostle Paul, I will further assure you, *I covet no Person's Silver, Gold or Apparel*. On the contrary, having seen and lamented the divers and hurtful Lusts I was obnoxious to, when I was in Possession of a plentiful Estate, and that they that are rich fall into many Temptations; my Business is, to warn and caution you that are rich,

rich, against the Misapplication of your Wealth. Riches attain'd lawfully, without Covetousness, and too anxious a Desire and Pursuit (which may obstruct our Godly Attainments) I grant, are one of the Blessings of Heaven, if rightly and properly applied; as they put us in a Capacity of providing a necessary Subsistence for our Families, and doing Acts of Justice and Mercy to our Neighbour: But then we must remember, we are only Stewards of this, as well as every other Gift of God; and that we are as culpable in his Sight, and as accountable to his Justice, for the Waste and Abuse of Wealth, as for the ill Use of any other of his Favours and Mercies.

Some plead for Extravagance, Vanity and Luxury, in the absurd Terms of an old Proverb, that those *who win Gold, have a Right to wear it*; and that they may apply their own Money to what Purposes they please: Not considering, that all temporal Blessings are only lent us, and that we can't properly call any Thing our own. And if we will but look about us, we shall see this Assertion greatly proved, by observing the many Vicissitudes in this one Article of Wealth. Riches, metaphorically speaking, take to themselves Wings, and fly away from one to another, and that we are as often snatched from them, as they from us; a significant Instance of which we have in our Saviour's Parable of the rich Man, who, having laid up much Goods for many Years, sottishly addresses his Soul in these Words, *Soul, take thine Ease, eat, drink, and be merry*, Luke xii. 19. Thus being in this stupid Condition, blinded by the God of this World, he never once reflects on the Possibility of being deprived of his Idols by any Means whatsoever.

But now observe the Equity and Justice of the Almighty in his Judgments, which He often inflicts on those who adore the Gift, but despise and neglect the Giver; who receive of his Bounty, but fail to acknowledge it; who eat and drink, and rise up to play: By one Stroke of his Justice He breaks the Incantment this Man had been held in by Satan; discovers the Uncertainty of temporal Goods and Enjoyments, and the Vanity or Folly of trusting and placing our Happiness in them; and, by the Word of his Power, he commands this poor, deluded Mortal, to resign, not only his Wealth, but his very Soul, to Him that gave it; saying to him in these Terms, *Thou Fool, this Night shall thy Soul be required of thee; then whose shall these Things be which thou hast provided?* Melancholly Situation indeed! and far worse than if his Goods had been taken from him. This Man, as far as we may be allowed to judge by his Folly in this Instance, must be in a very unfit State and Condition for Heaven, where it does not appear he had been careful to lay up any Treasure; *For where the Treasure is, there will the Heart be also*. And in our Lord's Observations on this unhappy Person's Condition, he subjoins, *So (or in such a Case) is he that layeth up Treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God*.

But tho' I, as well as others, had received a Proportion or Talent of Grace in my Heart, for the great Purposes before named, yet I was not careful to improve it; and while I continued in neglect of my

Duty, so long this Grace proved ineffectual, and in vain: But *the Gifts and Callings of God are without Repentance*, Rom. ii. 29. for tho' many may neglect to answer his Call, or improve his Gifts, nevertheless the Almighty repents not that He hath dispensed and bestow'd them; but graciously condescends, by his frequent Visitations, either immediately, or instrumentally, by Mercies, or by Judgments, to awaken, persuade, excite, or allure us to our Duty; and tho' in Time past we believed not God, who in Effect we are said to deny, when we worship him not as God; yet He repents not that He hath called us, but repeats his Call to the Careless and Negligent; of which Number I was, when the Almighty, whose Compassion fails not, return'd to visit my Soul.

In this, the happiest Season of my Life, when the Time was come, wherein, thro' Mercy I obtained Mercy; and in which the Most High vouchsafed to favour me, by opening my Eyes, and discovering to me the Things that belonged to the everlasting Peace and Happiness of my Soul. And at the same Time the LORD was pleased to display his excellent Glory, and to give me a Sight of the Beauty of Holiness; and then I could say, *I have heretofore only heard of Thee by the Hearing of the outward Ear*. But now mine Eye saw his Glory; this amazing tho' lovely Appearance of God to my Soul, caused me many a time to bow down before the Majesty of Heaven, and, indeed, to abhor myself in Dust and Ashes, and frequently to mourn over him whom I had many times pierced and griev'd in his Holy Spirit, by my Vanities and Folly, in giving his Glory to Idols, and the Praise that was his Due, to the Imaginations of my own Heart.

This was the first Day's Work of the new Creation in my Soul; the Almighty, by the Word of his Power, had commanded the Darkness to be divided from the Light, and, by this happy Medium, I continued to make new, and, to me, unusual Discoveries; I saw that I had been an Alien from the Common-wealth of *Spiritual Israel*, and a Stranger to the Covenant of *Promise*, having no Hope in CHRIST, as I had lived without God in the World; and, by neglecting to give that Honour due to his Name, I had forfeited the Favour of the Almighty, and that heavenly Paradise, which the Smiles of his Countenance and Presence alone can constitute: Not for † *Adam's* Fault imputed to me, but my own actual Disobedience, refusing that reasonable Service and Homage which he expects and requires from all his rational Creatures. I had been remiss in Acknowledgments to my great Creator, and merciful Benefactor, at whose bountiful Hand I had received not only a spiritual Blessing, or Gift of Grace in my Heart, but I was indebted to Divine Beneficence for a large Share of temporal Blessings; neither of which was received, or respected, with a proper Gratitude, nor applied to the Purposes (I am since

† To refute this Doctrine, read Dr. *Whitby's* Treatise on what is call'd *Original Sin*. In the Course of my Remarks, I choose to produce other Authorities than those of our own Society; since such is the unaccountable Prejudice of some People, that they will reject Truth and Reason, for no other Cause, but that it is offer'd by one call'd a *Quaker*.

since convinced and perswaded in my Understanding) they were designed for, by the holy Dispenser.

And 1. The Seed (or Word) sown in my Heart by the great Husbandman, was not suffer'd to fructify, or bring forth Fruit, agreeable to the Praise and Glory of God, as the Cares of this Life, and the Deceitfulness of Riches, enter'd in and choak'd the Seed, and it thereby became unfruitful: And not only the Cares and Concerns of the World, which sometimes become accidentally unlawful, but the vain Pleasures, irrational Recreations, trifling, unedifying, and pernicious Books, with all the Train of idle Amusements, to which the World commonly annex the soft and gentle Epithet of *Innocent*, ingross'd my precious Time; the proper Improvement of which, wise Men, in all Ages, esteemed the highest Point of Wisdom, and of so inestimable a Consideration, as occasions a late pious Author to assert, that the *Man was yet unborn, who truly knew the Value of an Hour.*

And the Apostle *Paul*, in an earnest Manner, exhorts the Believers to *redeem the Time, because the Days are evil*; and again, directs the Church to *walk in Wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the Time.* That Time was valuable, and to be well employ'd and improv'd, I had often heard; but false, delusive Pleasure unwilling to hear, or at least to yield to the Voice of Truth, robb'd me of that Blessing I am now, thro' God's Assistance, endeavouring to redeem and improve, agreeable to the Apostle's Advice: *Pass the Time of your sojourning here in Fear* (and Reverence) fearing to offend the Infinite Majesty of Heaven, who takes Cognizance of every Thought, Word, and Action. But alas! this Truth and Consideration never so much as occur'd, when I was spending my Days in Vanity, and my Years in unprofitable Pursuits; forgetting the Holy One of Israel, Days without Number; never so much as remarking the royal Prophet's Assertion, That (not only the flagrantly wicked) but *those who forget God, shall be turn'd into Hell.*

And the Prophet *Jeremiah* tells us, *God will pour out of his Anger upon the Families that call not upon his Name*, Jer. x. 25. And God declares, that *He had suffered the Desolation of his People Israel, because they had forgotten Him, and burnt Incense unto Vanity; that they had forgot Him, and trusted to Falshood; that according to their Pastures or Possessions, so were they fill'd, and their Hearts thereby exalted; therefore have they forgotten Me, saith the LORD.* And the Prophet *Hosea* complains, that *Israel had forgot his Maker, and builded Temples to Idols; that the Calf (or Idol) of Samaria had cast them out of his Favour; for they had sown Vanity and the Wind, and should reap the Whirlwind; that Strangers should swallow them up, the Enemy should pursue them, and a Fire should devour their Palaces.*

These are some of the dismal and deplorable Effects of Sin, and the terrible Penalties Sinners who forget God, and make to themselves Idols of Vanity, are obnoxious to, in this Life; where the temporal Consequences of Sin appear terrible and shocking, which one would think a sufficient Reason to deter People from every Appearance of Evil;

Evil; but when we reflect on this Truth, *viz.* "That without sincere returning to God by Repentance, and Amendment of Life; and being reconcil'd to Him thro' Sanctification of our Spirits by CHRIST JESUS, the Punishment for our Sins will attend us to all Eternity, and will assuredly deprive us of that Rest and Peace prepar'd only for the People of God:" How should this Thought speedily remove from every Heart, that is not quite insensible and obdurate, the dangerous Sin of Unbelief in the Power of God, and excite them to apply to the Father of Mercies for Remission of Sin by CHRIST JESUS! But some may object, That tho' many, call'd Christians, live in too much Forgetfulness of God, yet they cannot be chargeable with worshipping of Idols, as the *Jews* were; so that the above Scripture Passages cannot be altogether applicable to them.

I shall answer this Objection in the Words of one of the first Movers of the Reformation, *viz.* Dr. John Staupitz: *He that prefers any Thing that is outward and temporal before God, prefers the Creature before the Creator; and robs God of his Glory and highest Honour, and makes that to be his God, which is not God: For that which the Heart loves most, the same it honours as God, whatsoever the Mouth may say to the contrary. Who knows not, that if a Christian should now-a-days say, that his Goods, &c. were his God, he would be condemn'd as a Blasphemer; and yet who is there of us, who doth not see in the daily Practice and Actions of Men, that temporal Goods, Pleasure and Honour, are preserv'd before God, and his Love, to that Degree, that it is Matter of Lamentation? We will by no Means endure the Reproach of being Idolaters, tho' indeed we are so, really and in Truth, no less than others were of old: At this very Day, O gracious GOD! many in Christendom worship Gold, Silver, Wood, and the Goods of this World, as the Heathens did Thousands of Years ago, notwithstanding they say with their Mouths, Our Father, which art in Heaven! But true Adoration consists in loving, not in speaking. He prays well, who loves God most; and he who does not love GOD, neither does nor can pray, tho' he repeat a thousand Psalms or Prayers: He who loves GOD, serves Him; but he who does not love Him, neither doth, nor can serve Him, however great Works of Devotion he may outwardly perform.*

But to return: In this careless and forgetful Situation, which I have mentioned, was I, when the Almighty dispensed a Share of his temporal Favours to me, which I received with a stupid Indifference, and without Thanksgiving, as they were common Mercies; "And like a certain Brute Animal, who devours the Fruit which falls from a Tree, without looking up to see from whence it comes:" So I received the Blessings of Providence no otherwise, but as Things of Chance, or of Course, or the Effect of Care and Industry; not considering whose Hand was necessary to render our Endeavours successful and prosperous; nor that the same Power that bestows and dispenses Blessings and Mercies, can in a Moment remand and call them back, and deprive us of them, whenever He pleases; and that for every Morsel we eat, we are indebted to God's Bounty and Goodness, and not to our own Wisdom or Prudence. In a Word, that in
Him

Him we live, move, and have our Being. But how insensible was I of these Truths, when, in Effect, I lived as if I had been an unaccountable and independent Being, and vainly thought my Mountain was made so strong, that it would never be removed! I was rich and full, and needed nothing, when alas! I was poor and miserable, blind and naked, and wanted all Things, when destitute of the Favour of God, and without witnessing the Smiles of his Countenance.

Thus, as the Psalmist confesses himself once, so foolish and ignorant was I, saying, in Effect, to God, "Depart from me, for I desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways: What is the Almighty, that I should desire Him? Or what greater Profit would accrue, if we pray'd unto Him, or serv'd Him?" By this false Reasoning is the Candle of the Ungodly extinguished; from whence proceeds Destruction upon the Inconsiderate and Unrighteous, unless they return, repent and amend. But now, behold the Goodness, Lenity and Long-suffering, of a merciful God! who had been long alluring me by his Mercies, which I passed light by, or rejected: He has now Recourse to his Judgments; but neither did I yet see that Afflictions rose not out of the Dust, but that Mankind were naturally and promiscuously born to Trouble. I was indeed afflicted, and I mourn'd; but it was for the Absence of temporal Blessings; and as my Desires and Pursuits extended no higher, I endeavour'd to support my Distress, by gratifying my Pride and Ambition to the Extent of my Power. At length, in this Day of Adversity, I began a little to consider, and applied to God, in Prayer and Supplication, that He would be pleased to deliver me out of my Distress, or support me under it; still ignorant of the Joys of his Salvation, or that there were spiritual Consolation in Store for me, on certain Conditions, if I rightly applied for them; but being insensible of the Want of them, I as yet asked them not, till the happy Season of my Life, wherein I witnessed a religious Turn of Mind, and the drawing Cords of God's Love inclining my Heart to seek his Face and Favour, with greater Ardency and Fervour than I had ever been sensible of before: I now began to view and consider Things in another Light than I formerly had done; and, by reversing the Perspective, the fading Objects and Enjoyments of this Life lessened in my View and Account; and as the Love of God and of heavenly Things increased in my Heart, so in Proportion my Fondness for worldly Enjoyments decreased and vanished.

At length the warmest Returns of Love and Gratitude began to arise in my Soul to God, who first loved me, and had done great Things for me, by plucking my Feet out of the Mire and Clay of Sin and Polly, and fixing them upon the Rock CHRIST JESUS. He also put a new Song in my Mouth, which none but those who are in Degree redeem'd by his precious Blood can sing, even Praises to our God! Thus on my turning to God, I began to witness new Thoughts, new Desires, new Affections, new Hopes, new Joys, and new Fears; and to see the Necessity of Regeneration and a new Birth unto Righteousness, without which I could not possibly enter the Kingdom of God; that all Things must be changed, and become new,

new, all of, and pointing to GOD. And farther, if I would be CHRIST's Disciple, I must deny myself, take up a Cross to my own Will, be subject to, and follow Him, under whose Banner I had now lifted.

Thus examining and pursuing this Doctrine and Precept of our LORD's, I was naturally led, in some Degree, to what is called *Quakerism* (tho' it appear'd to me in no other Form nor Name, than that of primitive Christianity) which, in my first Thoughts of Religion, I had no more Intention of embracing, than I had of receiving *Mahometism*; knowing little more of the *Quakers*, than that They were a plain People in their Garb and Speech. But it has been remark'd to me, that my Mother was some Time of this Persuasion, and no Wonder that I should have a warm Side for her Opinion.

I answer'd, My Father was a Member of the Church of *England*, and educated me in that Way; and I well remember, I had a much warmer Side for his Opinion; not that I knew what was the essential Difference in their religious Sentiments, or at least that affected me, any farther than that one allow'd me something more Liberty in Dress; whereas the other would tell me, Plainness in Apparel was most agreeable to Christianity, and to the Divine Being, who hated Pride in his Creatures. To be sure, I thought this Doctrine absurd, by the Reflection I remember I made at the Time, *That God, I believ'd, would not reject me, on the Score of wearing Lace, or a fine and gay Silk Gown.* I have thought since, any one might imagine I had fetch'd my Argument from *Lucretian* Principles, that the Almighty could not descend so low as to notice such Trifles, or mark little Follies, if Gaiety in Apparel should be One; but no Wonder that when I was a Child, I should reason as a Child.

I am sensible that Silks, Ribbons and Lace, are not any where in Scripture directly forbidden; but I learn from thence, that Pride, and all Manner of Superfluity, is. And if, by wearing this rich Silk, or adorning ourselves with the other superfluous Ornaments, we feed and nourish a proud, vain Desire, it becomes by this Circumstance as unlawful as Pride itself; and that they do so, I have greatly experienced: *For tho' Religion stands not simply in Clothes, yet true Religion stands in that which sets Bounds and Limits to the Mind with respect to Clothes, as well as other Things.* And to strengthen this Assertion, or rather to prove it, I shall offer an Instance of my own Experience, *wiz. When it pleas'd the LORD to visit my Soul, and to appear to me in his Glory, the View of which discover'd to me my own Unworthiness, and caus'd me not only to despise and abhor myself, but my splendid Apparel also: I had now no Delight in Dress and Ornament, nor other Things I had usually taken much Pleasure in: True Christianity, which I began to be acquainted with, set a Bound to my Desires, and directed me to Plainness, before I had any Intention of joining the Society of the People call'd Quakers; and indeed all earthly and transitory Objects were, and are, in my View and Estimation, as Loss, Dross and Dung, in Comparison of the Excellency, Glory and Beauty, I behold in God, and find in*
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the Enjoyment of his Divine Favour; and at times I am ready to cry out, O! how great is his Glory, and transcendently great his Beauty!

But to return: When I was (by Marriage) remov'd from my Mother's Care and Direction, I continued in my Father's Profession of Religion, for no other Reason that I remember, but that it allow'd me most Liberty in Dress and Recreations; tho' my Father, as well as my Mother, did not fail to inculcate a just Abhorrence of the Evils the moral Law condemns. However, when I consider'd and examin'd religious Matters with more Seriousness, Sincerity and Attention, than was usual with me, I found the little Religion (or rather the Profession of it) that I had, was that of my Education, which I could not properly call my own, as it was not the Religion of my Judgment, which I find absolutely necessary, and highly reasonable to be concern'd for. I read the Scriptures with some Attention; and I have consider'd the following Text, that *unless we deny ourselves, and take up a daily Cross, we cannot be CHRIST's Disciples*. This Passage appear'd to me to contain some other and further Construction and Design than many People allow, who confined it to moral Precepts and Duties. But before I proceed to say in what Sense others, as well as myself, understand this Christian Doctrine; I think, it may not be impertinent briefly to give some Reason of my Faith and Hope, which I desire to do in the same Disposition the Apostle recommends, *viz. In Meekness and Fear*. And first, upon examining the Creed call'd *The Apostles*, I could subscribe to every Article therein contain'd, except one, (*CHRIST descended into Hell*) which, if it be meant no other than the Grave, I subscribe to that also.

Next, I have consider'd and examin'd *The Articles of the Church of England* (of which I had profess'd myself a Member some Years, without so much as knowing what Doctrines or Principles they profess'd and held; this, I may venture to say, without Breach of Charity, is the Case of many Professors at this Day.) But upon perusing the above Articles (as well as considering the Opinion of most dissenting Sects) I could not reconcile some Opinions therein contain'd with Scripture Doctrine and Testimonies; particularly a Paragraph in the fifteenth Article, where it is said, "Tho' we are all baptized and born again in CHRIST, yet we offend in many Things."

This Opinion appears to me manifestly repugnant to Scripture Accounts of many, who attain'd in this Life a perfect Freedom from Sin. And the Text farther quoted by that Church will not import the Apostle himself to be included in it, *1 John i. 8*. And I am of Opinion, we may safely interpret the Passage by some other Scripture Text; wherein the Apostles include themselves with Sinners, yet by no Means can be understood, that they themselves were in the like Circumstances. And now shall offer the following Scripture Testimonies, which appear to corroborate, and greatly to justify us, with regard to a Tenet we particularly hold, *viz. The Possibility* (God's Grace assisting) *of obtaining a perfect Freedom* from Sin even in this Life.*

* This Doctrine being deny'd by most Christians except the *Quakers*, I thought proper to transcribe Part of a Conversation on that Subject, between a *Clergyman* and a *Quaker*-----

Life. Noah was a just Man, and perfect in his Generation. Job was a perfect Man, and one that fear'd God, and eschew'd Evil. God made David's Way perfect. Blessed are the Undeiled in the Way, who walk in the Law of the Lord. Be ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. Every one that is perfect, shall be as his Master. We speak Wisdom among them that are perfect. This also we wish, even your Perfection. Finally, Brethren, be perfect. That the Man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good Word and Work. But the GOD of all Grace make you perfect. That you may be perfect and intire, wanting nothing. Therefore leaving the Doctrines of the Principles of CHRIST, let us go on to Perfection. Zachariab and Elizabeth were both holy, walking in all the Commandments of the LORD blameless. The Apostle Paul kept a Conscience void of Offence, both in the Sight of GOD and Man. If we say we have Fellowship with GOD, and walk in Darknes, we lie, and do not the Truth. Every Man that hath Hope in CHRIST purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth Sin transgresseth the Law, for Sin is the Transgression of the Law. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; for you know that CHRIST was manifested to take away our Sins. Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little Children, let no Man deceive you. He that doeth Righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous; and he that committeth Sin is of the Devil. For this Purpose was the Son of GOD manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil. Whosoever is born of GOD sinneth not; but he that is begotten of GOD keepeth himself, and that wicked One toucheth him not, 1 John, ver. 18. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a Liar, and his Word is not in us; but if we confess and forsake our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness, which is Sin.

And further, I observe, that both the Old and New Testament abound with Exhortations to a Life of Holiness and Purity. Let us cleanse ourselves, says the Apostle Paul, from the Pollution of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of GOD. And I have never remarked any Text yet, that leaves me the least Room to think that a partial Holiness will render us acceptable to GOD.

And upon reading a certain Annotator * on the Subject, tho' he denies the Doctrine, yet is obliged to own this much, *That to require perfect Obedience to his Laws, is a Thing absolutely necessary on GOD's Part, from the Perfection of his Divine Nature, and his Relation to us as a Governor; to require that we should not sin; that is, says he, transgress any of GOD's Laws: For Sin being the Transgression of the*

Qua. Dost thou own a Purgatory?

Cler. No.

Qua. When then must we be freed from Sin, and made fit for Heaven.

Cler. I believe GOD Almighty is able to forgive his People their Sins, and fit them for Heaven, a little before they depart.

Qua. How long?

Cler. It may be an Hour or two.

Qua. I believe a Day or two, as well as an Hour or two.

Cler. I believe so too.

The Quaker carry'd gradually to a Month or two, till he brought it to seven Years; to which his Opponent answer'd, He believed the same.

* Doctor Whitby.

Law, and perfect and unspinning Obedience being one and the same, if God requires under the new Covenant that I should not transgress any of his Laws, as he most certainly must do, he must require me not to sin against them; and so he must require perfect and unspinning Obedience. Another Clergyman, discoursing on the Subject of Holiness, has these Words: *The Divine Being is transcendently holy, and infinitely perfect; he is the Fountain of all Holiness, and sanctifies his Saints, his People, and his Ministers; he requires perfect Holiness in those who approach him, and to be honour'd by his Servants.* And he further says, *That true Holiness consists in a Conformity to the Nature and Will of God; whereby a Saint is distinguished from the unrenew'd World, and is not acted by their Principles, nor govern'd by their Maxims and Customs.*

But farther, upon perusing the Scripture, I have found no Room for Ceremonies under the Gospel Dispensation, nor Precedent for Musick in the Christian Church. The Liturgy, or Form of Prayer, became quite useless to me, and singing *David's Psalms* burthensome; I consider'd, and it appear'd to me, we were endeavouring rather to please and gratify our own Ear, than singing to the Praise and Glory of God; and I find that *David's Psalms* can no more be suitable to the State of the Souls of a whole or numerous Congregation, than the same Form of Prayer can be agreeable to all Conditions and spiritual Cases. I shall, among many, give a few Instances of the Inconsistency and Unsuitableness of the Psalms of *David*, to the Conditions of Men of the following Characters, who, when they are in the Assemblies where these Psalms are sung occasionally, they customarily join in this Part of the Worship. The Wanton, who spends his precious Time in Jollity, he sings, *I am weary with my Groaning, I make my Couch to swim with my Tears.* The proud Atheist, who hath banished God out of all his Thoughts, he sings, *I have set the LORD always before me, &c.* The vain Man, who delights in the Company and Society of wicked Persons, he sings, *I have hated the Congregations of Evil-doers.* The wither'd Tree, dead to God, and consequently fruitless, he sings, *I am like a green Olive-tree in the House of God.* He, whose Heart is a Cage of Uncleaness, sings, *My Heart is inditing a good Matter.* The daily Feaster, whose Legs can scarce bear about his corpulent Body, he sings, *my Knees are weak thro' Fasting, and my Flesh faileth of Fatness.* Satan's Captive, who wallows in the Mire and Filth of Sin, he sings, *O LORD, truly I am thy Servant.* The lawless Man, whose Life is a Life of Rebellion, subject to Sin and Satan, he sings, *The Law of thy Mouth is dearer unto me than Thousands of Gold and Silver.* The Proud and ambitious Person sings, *LORD, my Heart is not baughty, nor mine Eyes lofty; my Soul is even as a weaned Child, &c.* It has been objected, that we may as reasonably sing *David's Psalms*, as read them; but I apprehend an essential Difference between reading them as *David's Experience*, or Words he used in praising God (which were no Doubt suggested by the Holy Spirit) and reducing them to our own Acts of Worship; unless the Words be suitable to the State of our Souls, and brought to our Remembrance by the same Divine Influence which presented them to

the Mind of *David*, according as they suited the Circumstance of his Soul, or were suitable or applicable to the Condition of others, to whom he sometimes speaks, in a feeling Sense, of the different States of the Godly and the Wicked. I have also consider'd it irrational to limit and prescribe to a Christian, even the weakest, a set Form of Prayer, since the Apostle *Paul* expressly declar'd, *We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us with Groanings, which cannot be utter'd*, Rom. viii. 26.

I remember, when I experienced the Work of God's Grace operating on my Soul, and discovering to me my State and Condition, the common Prayer became of no Service to me, as I found it highly necessary that my Heart should be prepar'd by the LORD to enable me to address him by his own Spirit, and when he is pleased to touch and incline the Heart to himself, behold (as it is said on a memorable Occasion) *we pray*; we are immediately taught to pray in Terms suggested by the Holy Spirit, who best knows our Necessities, helps our Infirmities, and causes us suitably to approach the Throne of Grace, and to request and pray with the Spirit, and with the Understanding. And as we are not to pray in our own Words, neither can we pray acceptably in our own Time; as I have witnessed on a very particular Occasion, when I professed myself a Member of the Church of *England*. Being return'd from a Voyage, I, according to Custom, sent Notice, that I should publickly give God Thanks for my Preservation at Sea; thus when the stated Prayer of Thanksgiving was read, I was indeed on my Knees, but my Heart was not properly warm'd nor influenced to address the Almighty at the Time the Congregation was told I was giving God humble and hearty Thanks for so great a Mercy; I repeated the Form of Prayer usual on such Occasions, but it was only with my Tongue, my Heart had little Share in this formal Devotion, and at the Instant, while on my Knees, I am not ashamed to say, I was made to tremble; and I attribute the Fear and Horror I then felt to the Error of that mistaken Devotion, which I was outwardly performing in an unprepared Spirit and Frame of Mind, and consequently the Sacrifice (If I may call it a Sacrifice) of Thanksgiving, which I had offer'd in so irreverent and unacceptable a Manner must be an Offence to God. Thus I find, that waiting to be suitably influenced by the Spirit of CHRIST, ought to be previous to this solemn Act of Worship.

But farther, as I have above noted, I find no Place in the Church of CHRIST for Ceremonies, as they appear to be a very great Obstacle in the Way of spiritual Worship; *for bodily Exercise profiteth little*; 'tis the Spirit of CHRIST must quicken us for spiritual Worship. And tho' God wink'd at Times of Ignorance and Blindness, when Men vainly imagin'd that Worship was most acceptably perform'd to him at this Place, or the other Mountain; in this, or the other Ceremony; yet CHRIST the Light, who came, and is come to dispel all the dark Clouds of Ignorance and Error, and to direct Men to himself the Way, the Light, and the Truth, on a remarkable Occasion explodes Men's Opinions in this important Matter, by saying, that it

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was neither at Jerusalem, nor yet at the Mountain (of Samaria) the Father was to be worshipped; but the Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: For the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit and those who worship (acceptably) must worship him in Spirit and in Truth, not in Formality and Ceremonies

The Author of the Preface to the Common Prayer tells us, *The Ceremonies retain'd in the Church (of England) were devised and instituted by Man, and some that are thrown out, enter'd at first with a Zeal without Knowledge, and grew daily to more and more Abuses; which not only for Unprofitableness, but because they have much blinded the People, and obscured the Glory of God, are rejected. Others, says he, tho' devised by Man, are retain'd for Order and Edification: And at the same Time tells us, that CHRIST's Gospel is not a ceremonial Law; but it is a Religion to serve God, not in the Bondage of the Figure and Shadow, but in the Freedom of the Spirit. To this last Proposition I heartily agree; then why should we return to the weak and beggarly Elements, or desire again to be in Bondage? You observe, says the Apostle Paul) Days and Months, and Times and Years; I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you Labour in vain: But as ye have received CHRIST JESUS the LORD, so walk in him, and beware lest any Man spoil you thro' Philosophy, and vain Deceit, after the Traditions of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after CHRIST. Why, as though living in the World, are ye subject to Ordinances? Touch not, taste not, handle not, which are all to perish with the using, after the Commandments and Doctrines of Men. But I shall no longer insist on these Matters of Disputation; neither do I propose to give an Account of the Tenet or Principles professed by us as a Society, that being already done in a very ample Manner by our Friend Robert Barclay. I have only thought proper to mention several Obstacles which lay in my Way when I began to search for Truth: For as my Business is not Controversy, but Love, Good will and Charity, to all Mankind, I purpose to give you a short Account of the great Disadvantages I labour'd under in a State of Forgetfulness of God, and the inexpressible Benefits I have witnessed from a Return to, and Attention upon God, and Submission, Resignation, and Subjection to his blessed Will and Commands. And as far as my Testimony to the Power and Efficacy of the Grace of God, and the Doctrine and Necessity of bearing the Cross, will go, to invite, persuade and beseech y u to draw nigh, and acquaint yourselves with God thro' JESUS CHRIST our LORD, who hath said, and now says, *Look unto me all ye Ends of the Earth, and be ye saved.* In vain is Salvation look'd for from the Hills or Mountains, or from our own exalted Imaginations, or high Pretensions to Religion. And I have this Testimony to bear to God's Power, that I witnessed Salvation from Sin only and alone, from the Omnipotent Hand of the LORD, giving me Victory over my vain Thoughts, Affections and Desires, and bringing them under the Power of the Cross of CHRIST, by which I am crucified unto the World, and the World unto me. Therefore if you would enter into his Rest, harden not your Hearts against the Call and Invitation our
compassionate*

compassionate LORD continue to give *all (returning) Sinners*; *Come unto me*, (says CHRIST) *all ye that are weary, and heavy laden*, with the Burden of your Sins, be willing to part with them, and he will give you Rest. Let not, I beseech you, the Sin of Unbelief, in the Power of CHRIST, enter your Hearts: *For if ye believe not* (says CHRIST) *that I am He*, (viz. the Saviour of the World, who is come to save you from your Sins) *and continue in your Sins, you shall die in them; and then whither I go you cannot come.* Fly then for your Lives, I beseech you; fly from the Wrath to come; apply to CHRIST for eternal Life, and he will inform you what you must do to be saved; his Power is eternally and unchangeably the same; his Hand is not shorten'd, that it cannot save, neither is his Ear heavy, that it cannot hear; therefore give not Sleep to your Eyes, till you witness God in CHRIST reconciling you to himself. The Time present, we all know, is only ours; then, while 'tis called to Day, let us hear his Voice, who speaks as never Man spoke, even with Power and Authority, saying, *Rise up you that are at Ease in your Sins, tremble ye careless Ones; cast your Idols from you, and look unto the Rock and holy One of Israel; seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the Wicked forsake his Ways, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and turn unto the LORD, and he will have Mercy, and to our God, who will abundantly pardon.*

I would now observe to you who indulge yourselves in the false Pleasures, vain Amusements and Recreations of the Age, which once I had a Fondness for, as well as you now have; that when the Almighty was pleased in his Mercy to open the Eyes of my Understanding, I plainly perceived by that Light (he had placed in my Conscience, which enabled me to discern between Right and Wrong, the Precious and the Vile) that a Life of Pleasure and Diversion was inconsistent with the Life of a Christian: I found, that to be thus carnally minded, has been Death to my Soul; but as I gradually witnessed CHRIST, and the Power of his Resurrection raising me from the Death of these Sins, I felt a Necessity of parting with, and denying myself of them; and I consider'd them to be of the greatest Obstacles in a religious Progress.

But it has been objected, that Recreations are absolutely necessary to unbend and relax the Mind, when it has been occupy'd or employ'd in worldly Affairs, or in the more serious Attention on divine Objects, to which it is not possible it can be attending always.

I grant, that our LORD's enjoining his Followers, to *watch and pray continually*, and Paul's exhorting the Thessalonians to *pray without ceasing*, does not, in a strict and literal Sense, oblige us to be always on our Knees, nor occupy'd in mental Prayer; for tho' we ought to be led and guided by the Spirit of CHRIST in all our Actions, or, at least, that all we do by Permission, as well as by immediate Direction, may be approved in his Sight; yet we are not at all Times under an Influence necessary for addressing the Throne of Grace, in the solemn Act of Prayer: *Nevertheless, we should always be so far in a Spirit of Prayer and Watchfulness, as we ought to be always in a Christian and*
virtuous

virtuous Temper of Mind, which is indeed truly and effectually worshipping the Divine Being, when we do not confine our Service to set Days, or appointed Hours of Devotion, but to a constant, steady and uniform Life of Virtue, Piety and Holiness. Some are apt to think all is well, and they have done their Duty to God, when they neglect not customary times of formal Prayer, or Devotion (as it is falsely called) or their Diversions don't interfere with this Formality, which by some is punctually perform'd.

This brings to my Remembrance the absurd as well as impious Character a certain Author gives of a Woman of this preposterous Composition of Diversion and Devotion, or, in his own Words, of Religion and Cards; he represents her, in some Interval of her Game, just recollecting it was her Hour of Devotion or Prayer, upon which she rises in great Precipitation, and desires her Neighbour to hold her Cards till she steps and says her Prayers. To mention this Character, is sufficient to shew the Absurdity of it. Again, the Description another Writer gives of a Woman at her Gaming-Table, is enough, one would imagine, to make the hardest Forehead blush: And to say no more, than that it renders her unaimable in the Eyes of reasonable People, one would judge, this would be a great Reason for her to decline the Diversion; but when she is represented accusing her ill Fortune, as she calls it, in Terms of Fury and Absurdity, the Portrait is horrid and shocking, unbecoming a rational Mind, and most unworthy any Person who professes Christianity. Compare this Character with humble *Mary's* sitting at her Lord's Feet, waiting to hear the gracious Words that proceeded out of his Mouth — compare it with the Apostle's Description of a Woman professing Godliness, whose Mind is adorn'd with *Meekness, Quietness and Modesty*; and see if you can discover one similar Line in the Characters. Again, describe a Woman dancing at a Ball, and adorn'd with all the Luxury and Pomp of Dress, tending, according to the Opinion of a pious Writer, to excite a Passion I forbear to name; and Country Dances, some of 'em, you know, are condemn'd by a Writer much admir'd by the polite and fashionable Part of the World; who peruse him, I have thought, to very little Purpose: Examine, I say, the Characters I have mentioned, and see if you can observe the least Trace of Christianity in them: In short, a dancing, gaming, masquerading Christian, appears as great a Contradiction, and sounds as harsh and uncouth in one's Ears, as a polluted Christian; which I have heard a learn'd Person say, was no Inconsistency; however, he fail'd in his Proof, since I can as soon reconcile Light and Darknes, CHRIST and Belial, as that a Person can be both a Sinner and a Saint, at the same Moment of Time. But, farther, tho some Recreations, properly chosen and adapted, may be lawful to a Christian; yet I have found those the Generality of People allow themselves in, are pernicious and hurtful in their Consequences, and therefore unlawful to, and inconsistent with the Life of a Christian.

Upon perusing the Scripture, I find the Apostle *Paul* exhorting the *Corinthians* in these Words, *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do,*

do, do all to the Glory of God: From whence I also learn, that I ought not to do any Thing that would obstruct or hinder, or may be in Opposition to God's Honour. And tho' I don't find any direct Prohibition of Cards, Plays, Balls, Assemblies, Masquerades, Musick-Gardens, &c. yet I observe they are indirectly forbid, as they have not the least Tendency to promote God's Glory; but, on the contrary, if you'll take my own Experience for Evidence, tend to hinder and prevent any Taste or Relish for divine or spiritual Enjoyments; the Soul given up to sensual Pleasure, lies sordidly groveling on Earth, when 'tis design'd to contemplate and enjoy more rational, as well as sublime and heavenly Delights.

We are told by an Author (pretty generally read) who discoursing, in some of his Writings, on the Design of the Almighty in placing Mortals here on Earth, *We were, says he, left here for a Time, to be educated for Heaven.* But when we look about, and observe what Methods for this Education are pursued, we can't well help concluding, the Generality of People have very unnatural, inadequate and gross Ideas, of that glorious Kingdom; and that, if they reflect at all, they must consider it no other than a *Mahometan Paradise*; as the Plan of Education now-a-days, seems design'd and calculated, to qualify for a Place where the Senses are only to be gratified and entertained: And indeed I am induced to think the Apostle's Doctrine quite revers'd by those called Christians, who, many of them, appear to live by Sight, and not by Faith. That Christians ought not to indulge themselves in the usual Pleasures, Diversions, and vain Customs of the World, seems evident from the sacred Writings; as these Amusements appear to be diametrically opposite to the Spirit, Temper and Rules of Christianity; that System being absolutely of another Nature and Tendency, calculated to subdue and regulate the Passions and Affections of the Mind, by calling us to a Life of Self-denial, and instructing us to walk in the Steps of an humble, lowly and crucified Saviour; for whoever will be CHRIST's Disciple, must *crucify the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts*; and I think the following Passages of Scripture greatly evince, that a Life of Pleasure is inconsistent with the Life of Christianity; the Apostle Paul tells us, that *those who live in Pleasure, are dead while they live*: Dead to God and spiritual Enjoyments. Christians are by the same Apostle exhorted to *redeem the Time, because the Days are Evil*; which I cannot reconcile to the fashionable Phrase used by professed Christians; *How shall we kill Time? Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, is a Precept incompatible to spending the greatest Part of our precious Time in Mirth, Wantonness, Gaming, Dancing, &c. *Be sober; be vigilant, because your Adversary, the Devil, is walking about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the Faith*: I have consider'd this Passage also, and find it contrary to the Practice of modern Christians; who, instead of resisting the Temptations of Satan, blindly seek and run into them, by their frequent Attendance on prophane and wanton Plays, vain Musick-Gardens, and wicked Masquerades, Opera's, &c. The Reason why Christians
are

are to be found in a watchful Posture, is here given; *Because our Adversary the Devil, is seeking whom he may devour*; we are exhorted to take Heed how we stand, lest we fall, to *watch and pray, lest we enter into Temptation*; therefore a Life of Wantonness and Riot, Ease and Security, cannot be agreeable to that Circumspection and Diligence requisite in every Christian, in order to *make his Calling and Election sure*. And I have thought a Life of Diversion and Pleasure, is very unsuitable to Sinners, who may be guilty of immoral Acts, and, perhaps, have lived long in open Violation of God's Laws: Surely it is high Time for such as these to awake out of Sleep, out of the Lethargy and Death of Sin; for the LORD by the Mouth of his Prophet, pronounces a Woe against such as are at Ease in their Sins; and calls upon them to reform, in these Words, *Cleanse your Hands, ye Sinners, and purify your Hearts, ye double-minded, be afflicted for your Sin, mourn and weep: Go to, you rich Men, weep and howl for your Miseries that shall come upon you; for you have lived in Pleasure on the Earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your Hearts as in a Day of Slaughter, &c.* And our LORD pronounces a Woe against them that *laugh now, for they shall weep and mourn; but blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall rejoice hereafter*. Weep for yourselves, and for your Children, was the Advice of CHRIST to the Daughters of Jerusalem; and very necessary for us at this Day, that our Mirth should be turned into Mourning, and the evil Rejoicing of many into Heaviness. These, and such like Sentences of the sacred Records, appear to me to be irreconcilable with the common Study and Practice of leaving Tokens of Mirth, Luxury and Wantonness, in every Place, saying, *To-morrow shall be as this Day, and much more abundant*; whereas we know not what shall be on the Morrow: For what is your Life! It is even as a Vapour, that appeareth for a little Time, and then vanishes away. *The Wicked, says holy Job, spend their Days in Mirth, and, in a Moment, go down to the Grave*. But some object, that Solomon seems to allow us Times and Seasons for Recreation and Divertisements, which you consider as unlawful Pleasures, *viz. A Time to sing, and a Time to dance, &c.* But, what is called an Allowance, appears to me to amount to no more, than that in Solomon's Days, as well as in all former Ages of the World, there were Times in which People did those Things he enumerates, and which he observes, only adds Vanity to all human Actions and Inventions; but he does not determine whether they were lawful or otherwise; He tells us also, of a Time to laugh, or rejoice; our LORD, as above, pronounces a Woe against those that laugh now *or in this Gospel-Day, wherein you are called to Repentance, to fit and qualify you to receive the Gospel of CHRIST and his Kingdom*] for they shall mourn and weep.

Solomon mentions a Time to hate; which under the Gospel is positively prohibited, or forbid, by CHRIST's own Remarks on the Jewish Law or Tradition; where he evidently shews, that there is no such Passion of the Mind to be exercised by Christians (except against Sin, as the Godly hate Sin, because it is a Breach of God's Law) no, not against our Enemies; his Gospel being universal Love

and Beneficence to all Mankind. But granting that Solomon indulged himself in the Pleasures and Vanities of the Age he lived in, which indeed, appears to be his Case; yet here how he estimates them, in what is commonly called his Recantation; having first proved worldly Wisdom, he perceived that this was Vanity and Vexation of Spirit: *For in much Wisdom is much Grief; and he that increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow*, Eccl. i. 18. Then says he, *I commended Mirth, because a Man hath nothing better under the Sun, than to eat, drink, and be merry—Go to, I will prove thee with Mirth, therefore enjoy Pleasure; but, behold, this is, also, Vanity; I said of Laughter, it is Madness, and of Mirth, what doth it?* Eccl. ii. 1, 2. *For even in Laughter the Heart is sorrowful, and the End of that Mirth is Heaviness*, Prov. xiv. 13. And we have this wise Man's Opinion, 'That it is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to the House of Feasting; and that Sorrow is better than Laughter;' *for by the Sadness of the Countenance, the Heart is made better: The Heart of the Wise, is in the House of Mourning; but the Heart of Fools, in the House of Mirth*: Thus, thou may rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth, and let thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes; but remember it is at thy Peril; for know thou, that for all these Things God will bring thee into Judgment.' Let us now hear his Conclusion of the whole Matter: *The Fear of the LORD is the Beginning of Wisdom, and to depart from Evil a good Understanding; therefore fear GOD, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man: For GOD shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be Evil*.

But further, to evince that the common Diversions and Amusements of the Age, are incongruous and unfit for Christians to recreate themselves with — do but propose to a pious, grave Clergyman, to accompany any one of you to a Ball, a Play, a Masquerade, or Assembly; or invite him to make a Party at Cards, Dice, or any Game; and see what an Indignity he'll tell thee thou hast offer'd him, telling thee, that these Amusements are inconsistent with his Function, &c. And indeed every one who has, or does frequent Play-houses, knows that those Clergymen who take the undue Liberty of frequenting them, go conceal'd and disguis'd in what they call a Lay-habit: Whereas, if these Entertainments were suitable to a Christian Spirit, and that solid, grave, pious Disposition of Mind, which it is the Duty of every common Christian to labour for, and be found in; why may not the best Christians frequent them openly, as well as those who pretend to a lesser Degree of Piety and Holiness? I am not acquainted with any Text in the sacred Writings, that allows me, or any one else, to be one Wit less pious, holy, or virtuous, than our Teachers; nay, David did not scruple to say, 'In Matters of Religion, or the Things of God, that he was wiser, and had more Understanding than all his Teachers;' *For thy Testimonies, O LORD, are my Meditation and Delight; I understand more than the Antients* (who undoubtedly were well acquainted with the outward and written Law) for this cogent Reason,

son, *because I keep thy Precepts.* And Paul exhorts the *Philippians* in these Words, *Brethren, be ye Followers of me; and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an Example; and whereunto we have already attain'd, let us walk by the same Rule, and mind the same Things.* And in his Directions or Council to *Timothy*, tells him, *To be an Example to the Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity [or Love] in Spirit, in Faith, and in Purity.* He also directs *Titus*, 'To exhort the young Men to be sober-minded; in all Things shewing himself a Pattern of good Works, in Uncorruptness, Gravity, and Sincerity.'

But it may be objected, that some of the Remarks on the fashionable Diversions of the World, don't immediately affect you, as you have no Masquerades nor Musick-gardens, to entertain you; neither are Theatrical Entertainments frequent amongst you. This is true; but you have, in the Winter-season, Assemblies once a Week, wherein you dance and game; Balls and Dancing at other Times and Places, Card-playing at your own Houses, &c. And, suffer me farther to say, That I am sensible you, many of you, fail not to give your Attendance on every Occasion of Mirth and Jolity; and that you mimic *Great Britain* in every Foppery, Luxury and Recreation, within your Reach; which discovers an equal Inclination, but less Power of gratifying a Fondness for Pleasure and Diversions: And tho' you may have few or no Opportunities of frequenting Plays, your Closets, doubtless, are furnish'd with Books of this Sort; which, if it be unlawful to see them exhibited on the Stage (as *William Law*, a Clergyman, greatly proves it is) 'tis equally unlawful and unfit for Christians to read them: And, permit me to remind you, that you have Bishop *Burnet's*, as well as Bishop *Tillotson's* Testimonies against Plays; who, in a Sermon on the Education of Youth, in so many Words, calls *the Play-house, the Devil's Chapel*: And in a Discourse against corrupt Communication, he occasionally mentions Plays, and says, 'They are intolerable, and not fit to be permitted in a civilized, much less a Christian Nation: They do most notoriously minister, to Vice and Infidelity: By their Prophaneness they are apt to instil bad Principles into the Minds of Men, and to lessen that Awe and Reverence which all Men ought to have of God and Religion: And by their Lewdness they teach Vice, and are apt to infect the Minds of Men, and dispose them to lewd and dissolute Practices:' Thus far Bishop *Tillotson*.

Now hear the Archbishop of *Cambray's* Sentiments of these kind of Books and Entertainments. In his Treatise on the Education of Youth he tells us; 'Young Persons, and especially Women, have roving Imaginations, and for want of solid Nourishment, their Curiosity turns on vain and dangerous Objects; they are extremely affected with Romances, and chimerical Adventures, and Plays, in which prophane Love bears a mighty Share, and fills their Minds with empty Notions, which bear no Proportion to the true Motive or Spring of our Actions in this present World: A poor Girl, whose Head is fill'd with surprizing Strains, is disappointed not to find, in the World, real Persons of the Character of Romantick Heroes; and as she would live like one of their imaginary Princesses, what

‘Disgust must it be for her to descend from this imaginary State, to the mean Parts and Offices of Housewifery?’

Thus you may observe from the Sentiments of these great and pious Men, the mischievous Consequences that attend the frequenting Play-houses, as well as reading prophane and unedifying Books; as they prove them hurtful in a civil or social, as well as in a religious Relation.

But further; tho’ my Experience is short, and Knowledge small, in the sublime Mysteries of Christianity, yet I have been induced to consider it both absurd and irrational to propose vain Amusements and Diversions to Christians, whose Conversation is in Heaven; who have tasted of the good Word of Life, witness’d of the Powers of the World to come, shar’d, in Part, of the Joys of Heaven, by divine Communion and Fellowship with God: For, as the Apostle says truly, “The Fellowship of all real Christians is with the Father, and with the Son, CHRIST JESUS; with whom, having sat in high and heavenly Places, they look down with holy Contempt on lower Enjoyments:” To prescribe, I say, to these earthly Pleasures and Delights, nay, vain and irrational Ones too, is, as the pious *Boyle* justly observes, as unreasonable, as if one should imagine an Eagle could be dazzled with a Glow-worm, when, from his high Station, he had been newly gazing at the Sun. And indeed were the common Recreations both innocent and lawful, a true Christian could not conceive any Delight in them, or in any Thing that tended to divert their Meditation, and carry them so far from God, whose Words and Presence are become more to them than their necessary Food; and even the Cares and Concerns of this Life, which on various Occasions, must necessarily occupy the Thoughts of Christians, are irksome and burthensome to many; as they, in some Sort deprive them of more near and intimate Communion and Intercourse with God; who, tho’ he is that High and Holy One, that inhabits Eternity, and dwells in Light inaccessible by mortal Eyes; tho’ Heaven is his Throne, and Earth his Footstool, yet condescends by his Holy Spirit to tabernacle with Men, and stoop so low as to stand at the Door of our Hearts, and knock for an Entrance. *Behold! saith the LORD, I stand at the Door and knock, if any Man open to me, I will come in and sup with him, and he shall sup with me.* Thus, when we are made Partakers of this blessed and divine Communion and holy Supper, we are ready to cry out after this Manner, ‘Tis good for us to be here; Lord! Evermore give us this Bread! I sometimes thought the royal Psalmist seem’d to be much in the Case or State I have mentioned; thirsting after God, as he himself expresses it, but often interrupted and carry’d away by the Avocations of his Kingdom, and Perplexities from his Enemies, at a greater Distance from God than was pleasing to him, and which he seems to have in View, and lament, when spreading his Cause before the Almighty, he complains of the Oppression from Men of the World, *who, says he, have their Portion in this Life.* And, on another Occasion, he describes some of the same Disposition, enquiring, *Who will shew us any (temporal) Good? But as for me, I shall*

shall be satisfied with thy Likeness; I will behold thy Face in Righteousness; LORD lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon me, then shall I rejoice more, than when Corn, Wine and Oil encreaseth. And again, When I awake (or am free from Interruption) I am still with thee, where I drink in thy Presence of the Fountain of Life, and in thy Light I see more Light; for blessed is the Man whom thou chooseth, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts, for in thy Presence is fulness of Joy, and at thy Right Hand are Rivers of Pleasures for evermore! And he pronounces the Man blessed, whose Delight is in the Law of the LORD, and who meditates therein Day and Night..

Such Meditations of the LORD are sweet unto his People, and makes them glad in his Presence; and the spiritual Intercourses, with which the Almighty in great Mercy and Condescension is pleased to favour his Servants and Children, are indeed in some Degree Foretastes of Heaven: For tho' the Apostle tells us, *Eye (the Eye of the natural Man, who is devoted and enslaved to earthly Things) hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart (of such Men as these) to conceive the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: For the Spirit searcheth all Things, yea, the deep Things of God: But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them (while he remains in his natural and carnal State) because they are spiritually discerned.*

But to proceed; I have partly told you what Recreations are consider'd by us as unlawful for Christians to be exercised in; and shall now, in the Words of one of our Worthies, tell you what we judge lawful or convenient. *Innocent Diversifements*, says he, *which may sufficiently serve for Relaxation of the Mind, are these; Friends may visit one another; bear or read History; speak of the present or past Transactions; follow Gardening; use geometrical and mathematical Experiments, and such Things of this Nature; in all which we are not to forget God. To this let me add the Concurrence of the Bishop of Cambray, in his Rules for educating Youth; who, speaking of Recreations proper for a young Person, says thus: There is no Need of fine Machines or Sights, theatrical Poms or Expences, to recreate a young Woman; but an instructive Reading; a Labour which is by herself freely undertaken; a Walk, or a little innocent Conversation, which relaxes the Mind after hard Labour, and leaves a purer Joy in her, than of the most charming Musick, or studied Diversion. And, further, we may consider the Works and Order of Nature; for the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work; Day unto Day uttereth Speech, and Night unto Night sheweth Knowledge: Thus the invisible Things of God are discerned (by the Things that are visible) even the Eternal Godhead. By such Observations, says one of our Authors, The Creation would no longer be a Riddle to us; the Heavens, Earth and Waters, with their respective various, and numerous Inhabitants; their Productions, Natures, Seasons, Sympathies, and Antypathies; their Use and Benefit, would be better understood by us; and an eternal Wisdom, Power, Majesty and Goodness, very conspicuous to us, thro' these sensible*

sensible and passing Forms; the World wearing the Mark of its Maker, whose Stamp is every where visible, and the Characters legible to the Children of Wisdom: This would direct People in the Use of the World; for how could Man have the Conscience to abuse it, while they see the great Creator staring them in the Face, in all and every Part of it. And add; As Man is consider'd as the Epitome of the World, we should not be ignorant of our own Make and Frame; a Glass, in which we should see that true, instructing and agreeable Variety, which is to be observed in Nature to the Admiration of that Wisdom, and Adoration of that Power, that created and formed us.

These and such like Relaxations, from higher Attentions, do not exclude God; whereas it would be impious so much as to imagine, that the Smiles of God's Countenance, or his holy Presence, can in the least Degree be enjoy'd in the common Pastimes and Diversions of the World; 'tis not expected nor pretended to by any of the Votaries to Pleasure. On the contrary, how is the sacred Name of the Almighty daily and frequently prophaned, not only by profess'd Gamesters, but by Persons of both Sexes, who play, as they say, for Diversion, and who make no Scruple frequently to take God's holy Name in vain, and use it wickedly and absurdly to bless or curse their, as they term it, good or bad Fortune! And indeed it has been often Subject of Amazement and Sorrow to me, when I so frequently meet with, and observe this Impiety, even amongst Professors of Christianity of most Denominations, who irreverently, and, without Fear, take God's sacred Name into their Mouths in their ordinary and trivial Discourse, and vain Conversation; not considering that this Practice is an open and manifest Violation of one of God's Laws or Commands, in which he declares, *He will not hold them guiltless that take his Name in vain* (which Precept they frequently repeat in their Worship.) And our LORD assures us, that for every idle Word that Men shall speak, they shall give an Account in the Day of Judgment; how much more then for this daily Breach of One, not the least, of his Precepts? I would beg Leave to remind you, how careful and circumspect David was in his Words; I, says he, *will take Heed to my Ways, that I sin not with my Tongue; I will keep my Mouth as with a Bridle, &c.* And the Apostle James tells us positively, *That Person's Religion is vain who bridleth not his Tongue: That we suffer no corrupt Communication to proceed out of our Mouths; but, on the contrary, such as is good, to the Use of edifying, that it may minister Grace to the Hearers.* One Mark of the Enemies of God is, that they prophane his Name. *Thine Enemies, says the Psalmist, take thy Name in vain, O God!*

In the Life and Character of *Robert Boyle*, as an Honour to his Memory we are told, That he never mentioned the Name of the Almighty, but with the greatest Reverence, and always made a Pause at the same Time: I wish the Example of so pious a Man may be more regarded, and the Evil Consequence of the above impious Practice more consider'd. But to return: The Manner in which we think it allowable to spend our leisure Hours, as has been observ'd;
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does not exclude God; but ever admits and suggests some suitable edifying, moral and pious Reflections, never forgetting to have an Eye to God; and as we live in a Sense of his Fear and Presence, short Ejaculations, or Breathing, which come from, will often ascend to, God. On the contrary, where is the least Room for God, among those People who are ridiculously term'd *People of Fashion*, especially in *Great Britain*, where the Hours of People of this Name are spent in Folly, Impertinence and Wickedness? As Home is burthensome to Persons of this Cast, 'tis now fashionable to go Abroad to Breakfast, and, like those prophane Persons the Apostle *Peter* describes, They count it Pleasure to riot in the Day-time; some of these dance great Part of the Morning away, while others are entertained with Drollery, Mimick'ry and Buffoonery. When they are sufficiently tired with this Levity and Wantonness, the next Appearance of the Women at least, is at the Mercer's, Milliner's, or Toy-shop, spending in Folly, Superfluity and Extravagance, while the Husbands of some of them are perplexing their Brains how to support his Wife's Vanity, which is now become his own, as he proudly considers it a Reproach to himself, that his Wife should be less fine and fashionable than his Neighbour's. The Toilet claims the Remainder of the Morning, 'till call'd upon at perhaps Three or Four o'Clock, for Dinner; and then she is so hurried and uneasy, that she can't stay longer at her Glass to admire her Fopperies, that she has little to do but quarrel with her Dinner or Servants, 'till the Hour of Visiting or Diversions, which possibly may continue till Three or Four next Morning. By the Account you have of one Day, you may easily conjecture how the whole Week is spent. The Business of this Week being over, let us now see how the first Day of the next is employ'd, or whether any thing of the Christian appears in their Behaviour on this Day. Having no Business to do on this idle Day, as many make it, some indulge and sleep longer than usual on other Days, except those who use it as a Day of Exercise or Recreation, making Excursions into the Country merely for Pleasure. But let us attend those who go to their respective Places of Worship regularly, these, by the preposterous, fantastical and splendid Dresses, of both Male and Female, would induce a Stranger to think were Idolators, repairing to some Heathen Temple, rather than the Worship of the true God, who beholds their Splendor * and Pride with Contempt, and every One that is proud will be abase; for it is said, *The Lord of Hosts hath purposed to stain the Pride of all earthly Glory*. But next, let us observe them in their Worship; and here again, we might imagine they were addressing some senseless dumb Idol, rather than the great Searcher of Hearts: For if we may be allow'd to judge by the Evidence of our Senses, when we see the Eyes of the greatest Part of the Congregation wandering abroad, on the Faces of Dresses

of

* "Are God's Eyes charm'd thy Vestments to behold,

"Glaring in Gems, and bright with glitt'ring Gold?"

"The Sacrifices he requires,

"Are Hearts which Love and Zeal inspires,

"And Vows with strictest Care made good."

of each other, we may certainly conclude their Hearts are not at Home, or intent on their Worship: But how monstrous and impious is the Behaviour of these People, pretending to be employed in the Service of the Supreme Being, when we behold them bowing and paying Homage to each other, sometimes in the midst of their Worship. This irreligious Conduct I have not only been an Eye Witness of, but in the Practice of it, when I professed with you; on which Behaviour, as well as other Parts of Indevotion, I have since reflected with Horror; and found our LORD's Words on several Occasions, verified in myself; *I had been indeed worshipping I knew not what; therefore in vain was all the Formalities and Ceremonies I was performing outwardly, when I received no inward or spiritual Benefit.*

A certain Clergyman, now living, as far as I know, (in his Remarks on the Levity and irreverent Conduct of People in this false Devotion) wishes *Their Prayers may not be found in the Catalogue of their Sins.* And another advises them, when at their Prayers, to pause, and ask themselves, *if they really do pray?* I have been greatly concerned, when I have thought that such Pretences to Worship can be consider'd no other (if I may be allow'd the Expression) than affronting the Almighty to his Face; and that he may take up the same Complaint as he did of old against the Jews, saying, *This People draw nigh to me with their Tongues and their Lips, but their Hearts are far from me.* And now the Worship is over, let us observe if we can hear any Remarks on the Sermon: No surely; that was not the Business that principally concern'd them; but the Fashions and Garbs of one another ingross the whole Observation, as soon as they are dismissed, and are commonly the Subject of Conversation most part of the remaining Day.

But when we consider the Practice and Preparation of the foregoing Week, the Horror and Amazement we must certainly have been fill'd with, while we are reflecting, will cease; and we shall conclude with Regret, That better cannot be expected from People, while they remain in such an inconsiderate, irreligious, and unhappy Situation! The Impiety of a Life thus spent in this Circle of Madness, Folly and false Devotion, is sufficient, one would think, to provoke and draw down the Indignation of the Almighty on the Heads of such Transgressors, with whom he has long suffer'd, in order to bring them to Repentance. And I have been led to admire and adore the long Forbearance and Mercy of the Majesty of Heaven, who is thus daily affronted and provoked by his Creatures; Creatures too of his Pleasure, whose Life, Breath and Being, depend on his Will; and who placed us here on this Earth to serve him our Creator, by glorifying him with our Bodies, Souls and Spirits. But alas! instead of giving the Honour due to his Name, or acknowledging him in all our Ways, as we are exhorted, 'tis impossible that People in this Course of Life that I have described, can acknowledge God in any of their Ways; and that in the Room of having him in all their Thoughts, they take certain and sure Measures to exclude him from all their Thoughts. And when I have sometimes been

been reflecting on the common Expression made use of by many of these Sort of Christians, when they would confirm something they are going to assert for Truth, irreverently use these Words, *As I hope to be saved*, I have been much affected; for how People, who pursue these Steps, can rationally hope to arrive at Heaven, I cannot conceive. But supposing it possible to obtain it in their own carnal Way, how wou'd, or cou'd they relish the Pleasure said to be at God's Right Hand, or delight in his Presence, when they have had no Acquaintance, Communion or Fellowship, with him on Earth? What would they think of spending an Eternity in his Service and Praise, when the very Mention of Religion, and the Things of God, are irksome and troublesome in Time? And it is now become unfashionable and mean, and the Mark of a pusillanimous Spirit, so much as to insinuate any Care or Concern about their poor immortal Souls. But let not any deceive themselves, and hope to obtain Heaven and Happiness on easier Terms than the Almighty has proposed: For if we will credit the sacred Writings, none but those who have sincerely repented of their evil Ways, and turn'd from them; who have lov'd, fear'd and serv'd God here below, and who have gain'd the Victory over their sinful Lusts and Passions, can be admitted into this glorious Mansion of Bliss (nor none but those who are properly qualified for a Part in the heavenly Choir, who can sing the Song of the Redeemed) where the happy Employment of the Righteous will be praising God, and giving Glory to his Name; as *John* (call'd the Divine) testifies; *I saw*, says he, *those who had gotten the Victory, with Harps in their Hands, singing the Song of Moses, the Servant of the LORD, and the Song of the Lamb, saying, Great and Marvellous are thy Works, LORD GOD Almighty! just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints! Who shall not fear thee, O LORD! and glorify thy Name! And every Creature which is in Heaven praised God, saying, Blessing and Honour, Glory and Power, be unto him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever! And every Order of Angels continually crying, Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of Hosts! And those who are redeemed, whose Robes are wash'd in the Blood of the Lamb, who are arrived at this holy Habitation, not thro' Pomp and Luxury, but thro' great Tribulation, stand before the Throne of God, and serve him Night and Day in his Temple; and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell amongst them, and lead them to Fountains of living Water, and God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.*

If this be the happy Situation of the Blessed above, as we have no Reason to doubt but it is, examine yourselves, I beseech you, and see how you are prepar'd and qualified for such a Place and Condition; and remember 'tis the Living only, those whom CHRIST hath redeemed from the Power of the Grave of Sin, and quicken'd, by the Resurrection of his Holy Spirit, to a Life of Holiness, that can truly praise God; those who are dead in Trespasses and Sin, cannot celebrate his Praise, nor sing the Song of the ransomed Ones. Therefore you who are as asleep, in a carnal, easy and careless

State, hear the Voice of the Son of God, which speaks in your Conscience, saying, "Awake, arise from the Dead, and CHRIST shall give thee Life; stand in Awe, and Sin not; commune with your own Hearts, and be still; retire there, and see how the Case stands between God and your own Souls; acquaint yourselves with God, and be at Peace." For I testify to you this Day, that I have witnessed his Peace and Favour to be better than Life; for which my Heart, as well as my Lips, have often return'd, to his great Name, high Praises and Thanksgivings! O that many may be made sensible of his Favour to their Souls! that they may see, and fear, and turn unto the Lord, and trust in his Name: You who are afar off from God, draw near, and behold his Goodness, and taste it; and you who are near, with me, acknowledge his Might. 'Times of Ignorance God winked at; but now, in this Gospel-Day, he commands all Men, every where, to repent; as Life and Immortality is brought to Light, through the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST; whose Gospel you profess to rejoice in: But if those, called Christians (whom God hath known, above all the Families of the Earth) rebel against the Light, your Punishment will be the greater, according to the Proportion of Knowledge and Grace received: For that Servant who knows his LORD's Will, and prepares not himself, neither does according to his Will, *shall be beaten with many Stripes.*

Bring your Deeds therefore to the Light of CHRIST in your own Consciences, and see if they are wrought in God: Remember why some formerly refused to bring their Deeds to this Light; it was because it would manifest that they were Evil, and therefore reprov'd by it. And tho' the Prospect may appear gloomy and unpleasant to some, and you may be unwilling to break your false Peace, and disturb a Rest you have created to yourselves, and find a stronger Propensity to gratify than cross your sensual Inclinations and Appetites; tho' you may be averse to an Undertaking which is likely to prove troublesome; a Task so disgustful and disagreeable, as changing our old Customs and Manners; which you are told by the Apostle, must be done: *All who are in CHRIST JESUS, must be new Creatures; Old Things must pass away, all Things must become new, and all of God.* These you may possibly think hard Sayings; but remember, the Propensities of Flesh and Blood cannot enter with you into the Kingdom of God; whose Love, when you are really in Possession of it, will make *hard Things easy, and bitter Things sweet.*

Many are discouraged and afraid to enter upon a religious Course of Life, as it will, they imagine, retrench their Liberties, and render, their Lives unpleasant, gloomy and melancholy: This, indeed is one of the Subtilties of Satan; one of his evil Reports of the good *Land of Promise*, which 'tis his Advantage to prevent your Entrance into. But don't believe him, nor his evil Spies; he was a *Liar from the Beginning*, and remains so to this Day. Though the Path you must tread, is narrow, and will not admit of many Things which Pride has introduced, and the Tyrant, *Custom*, maintains and supports (and which by the Way, you will have no Affection

on for) yet there is Room enough to enjoy the necessary Things of this Life, in Moderation: Lament, you will indeed, because you have been so long Sinners, and did not turn to, love and obey God, sooner; and now will you mourn over him, whom you often pierced with your Sins: Grieve, perhaps, you may; but one Reason will be, That the *World lies in Wickedness*: But I dare venture to assert, that no true and real Christian, ever repented that he was so; for all such Experience, in Truth, that God's Service, is perfect Freedom; and that all *his Ways, are Ways of Pleasantry, and all his Paths, Paths of Peace.*

But farther, you who may be unwilling to enter upon this new but necessary Work, this one Thing is absolutely needful, remember and consider, that CHRIST positively assures us, *That except a Man be born again (of the Spirit) he can in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven,* John iii. 3. And that if ever you are saved, it must be according to God's own Prescription, *by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing (Power) of the Holy Ghost*; by his sanctifying Word and Operation; which is able to do more abundantly for you, than you can ask or think: Therefore let me entreat you, not to forsake your own Mercies: God is waiting to be gracious to you; his Hand is full of Blessings; accept I beseech you, of the Offers of his Grace, and answer to his Call, while the Day of your Visitation lasts, lest when you call, he should not answer; for he has declared, *That his Spirit shall not always strive with Man, for that he also is Flesh.*

Comply then with the Almighty's Terms of Salvation, and do not vainly hope or imagine He will be brought down to yours: Don't think yourselves safe, tho' many of you may be innocent from great Transgressions; remember, all and every Unrighteousness is Sin: But many flatter themselves, and believe, if they are not chargeable with gross Immoralities, that little Sins will not be noted by the Almighty; that Satan, the World, and the Flesh, are so powerful, that they cannot get the better of those little Weaknesses and Frailties so incident to human Nature; and as they do not, on their Principles, expect to be freed from them on this Side the Grave, they do not so much as desire or attempt to obtain a Conquest over them; but depend on God's Mercy, hoping he will not be extreme to mark small Offences; and if they are exact in some moral Duties, they imagine the Almighty will compound for little Reserves. That God is essential Mercy, I grant; but don't forget, that he is also Sovereign Justice, and will not condemn the Innocent; neither will he step aside from his Equity, to acquit the Guilty; for as the *Righteousness of the Righteous shall be upon him*, so shall the *Wickedness of the Wicked be upon him*, Ezek. xviii. 20. *Say ye to the Righteous, it shall be well with him, for he shall eat the Fruit of his Doings: But woe unto the Wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the Reward of his Hands shall be given him.*

But farther, these trite Arguments and Excuses, which are so generally made use of to defend evil Practices, appear as weak as the

Frailties they plead for; and I think, if I may be allow'd the Expression, People make the Almighty a very injurious Compliment, when they ascribe greater Power and Strength to Satan, than to the Most High. But perhaps they imagine the Almighty will dispense with some of his Attributes, since they allow him one in a more absolute Degree.

And now give me Leave to tell you what the great Protestant Advocate, *Chillingworth*, says on this Subject, in a Sermon preached before King *Charles* the First (if I remember right) which take it in his own Words and Sense. 'Some ascribe a Sort of Omnipotency to the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; and that God neither does, nor will give sufficient Strength to resist them; which Opinion he labours to explode, and positively affirms, that, by the Assistance of the Grace of God, it is in our Power to resist them; and shews the Necessity of so doing, from what we are so frequently and plainly assured of in the *New-Testament*, viz. That without actual and effectual Mortification, with actual and essential Amendment of Life, Regeneration and Sanctification, no Hope, no Possibility of Salvation. Thus you see, *says he*, all the divine Writers of the *New-Testament*, with one Consent, and with one Mouth, proclaim the Necessity of real Holiness, and labour to disenchant us from the vain Fancy, That Men may be saved by sorrowing for their Sins, and intending to leave them, without effectual Conversion and Reformation of Life: Which, it may be fear'd, has sent Thousands of Souls to Hell, in a golden Dream of Heaven.' And therefore he very justly apprizes his Audience, 'That it was not the pleasing themselves, of being of such a Sect or Profession, together with going to Church, saying or hearing of Prayers, receiving of Sacraments, hearing, repeating or preaching of Sermons; with Zeal for Ceremonies, or Zeal against them; or, indeed with any Thing else, than constant Piety towards God, Justice and Charity to our Neighbours, Temperance, Chastity and Sobriety towards ourselves; we shall one Day find we have not mocked God, but ourselves; and shall have our Portion among Hypocrites! We make the Church a Stage whereon to act our Part, and playing our Pageantry; there we make a Profession every Day of confessing our Sins, with humble, lowly, penitent and obedient Hearts; and yet when we have talked after this Rate, twenty, thirty, or forty Years, our Hearts, for the most Part, continue as proud, as impenitent, and as disobedient, as they were in the Beginning'. We make

* A certain Author, in some Remarks on the Confession and Litany in the Book of Common Prayer, exclaims after this Manner; 'What! always learning, and never coming to the Knowledge of Truth? Miserable Sinners you find us, and miserable you leave us! And, in the Case of Confession, he thus states the Matter; Suppose thou hadst a Son, and shouldst daily let him know what thou wouldst have him do, and he should Day by Day, Week by Week, and Year by Year, provoke thee to thy Face, and should say, Father, I have not done what thou commandest me to do: but I have done quite the contrary; and should continue to provoke thee to thy Face, once, or oftner, every Week, wou'dst thou not think him a rebellious Child, and that his Application to thee was mere Mockery? And would it not occasion thee to disinherit him?

' make great Protestations when we meet and assemble together to
 ' render Thanks to Almighty God, for the great Benefits received at
 ' his Hands: And if this were to be performed with Words, with
 ' Hosannas, Hallelujahs, Gloria Patri's, Psalms, Hymns, and such
 ' like outward Matters; peradventure we should do it very sufficient-
 ' ly: But, in the mean Time, in our Lives and Actions, we pro-
 ' voke the Almighty, and that to his Face, with all Variety of
 ' grievous and bitter Provocations; we do those Things which he
 ' has assured us to be odious unto Him, and contrary to his Nature.
 ' And therefore he laments to see, that the Power of Godliness, al-
 ' most in all Places, was decried and vanished; the Form and Pro-
 ' fession of it only remaining; that the Spirit and Soul of Religion
 ' was, for the most Part, gone, and only the outward Carcass or
 ' Shadow of it left behind! His whole Discourse was to press the ab-
 ' solute Necessity of Conversion from Sin, and to shew that nothing
 ' short of it would stand one in any Stead. That none were CHRIST's,
 ' but those who have crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts:
 ' They that have not done so, let them be as sorrowful as they please,
 ' they, as yet, are none of CHRIST's: And he cries out, LORD!
 ' what a Multitude of Christians are there in the World, that do not
 ' belong to CHRIST! And then goes on; It is not a wishing, but a
 ' working Faith: Not a wishing you were a new Creature; but be-
 ' ing a new Creature: Not a wishing you had kept, nor a sorrowing
 ' you have not kept, nor purposing vainly to keep; but the keeping
 ' his Commandments must prevail with Him, as it is not to the Wil-
 ' ling, but to the Obedient the Promise is given. But is not this,
 ' *says he*, preaching Works, as the *Papists* do? No, certainly; but
 ' it is to preach Works, as CHRIST and his Apostles do; it is to
 ' preach the Necessity of them, which no good Protestant, no good
 ' Christian ever denied; but it is not to preach the Merit of them,
 ' which is the Error of the *Papists*.

By this Author's Manner of preaching Works, we may infer, that
 he includes all Christian, as well as moral Virtues; by saying, 'We
 must become new Creatures, and keep all God's Commandments.'
 And I would observe to some, whom I have elsewhere said seem to
 confine Christianity to moral Duties, and, in some Sort, to exclude
 the Duties of the first Table, which we are as punctual to perform,
 as those of the Second; what will it avail us, tho' we be exact in
 moral Works, if the Motive of them do not come from God? for
 tho' we do all imaginable Justice to Mankind, tho' we give all our
 Goods to the Poor, and suffer for what we think our Religion; yet
 the Apostle *Paul* tells us, we may be deficient in the most material
 Point, if we have not *Charity*; or do not act from that which ought
 to be the Spring and Motive of all our Actions, *viz. Love to God*.
 The young Man who came to CHRIST, had, as he said, kept the
 Commands contain'd in the second Table, and yet we find him unfit
 for eternal Life; he was negatively good; he had not done any
 Murder, nor committed Adultery; he had not stole from, nor de-
 frauded his Neighbour; he had refrain'd from these Evils; but we
 do

do not find he had yet learn'd to do well: And when Obedience to a positive and particular Injunction, CHRIST our LORD, was pleased to lay upon him (supposed) to prove his Love and Obedience to GOD; when it was required of him to quit, or exchange, his earthly Possessions, tho' with great Advantage, no less than an Inheritance eternal in the Heavens, and take up a Cross to his own Will and Desires, and follow CHRIST, in this Way of Self-denial; behold he Coward-like withdraws, and departs, we are told, sad and dejected, being grieved with the Saying: This unhappy young Man's Refusal of the Kingdom, or Eternal Life, on our LORD's Conditions, occasioned him, with an apparent Concern, to say, *How hardly shall they that have, or in his following Words, that trust in Riches, enter the Kingdom of GOD!* And on another Occasion, he further declares, *That whosoever came to Him, and took not up his Cross, and denied himself, and hated not Father and Mother, Wife, Children, Brethren and Sisters, yea, and his own Life* (when brought in Competition of his Duty and Love to GOD) *he could not be his Disciple, and, consequently, unworthy of eternal Life.*

I shall now give you the Sense of Dr. Whitby, as well as my own, with Reference to the Precept of Self-denial, &c. He introduces his Subject by paraphrasing on *Matt. xiii. 22. Luke viii. 14. Mark iv. 19.* all which Remarks I shall pass over, and only observe what he says on part of the said 19th Verse. *The lusting after other Things; hurtful Things, which choke the Seed or Word of Life in us—The Lust of the Eye, he tells us, are our Desires of gay Apparel, rich Furniture, and such like, as by St. John are stiled, the Pride of Life: Desire of popular Applause, or high Estimation in the World: Advancement to high Posts, or great Places, above others: And, lastly, our excessive Love to our Relatives; as Parents, Wives, Children, Friends, &c. For when these Affections prove Temptations to Sin, as the Excess of them certainly does; they will then be obstructive of that Influence, the Word of Life should have upon us: And St. John informs us, that all these are not of the Father; but of the World, John ii. 15, 16. And that if we love or set our Hearts upon them, the Love of the Father is not in us—Therefore CHRIST requires us to deny ourselves in all these Things, to love them less, or hate them (comparatively) that we may be his Disciples.* And next I shall endeavour to illustrate, by one Instance, among the many I have experienced, how I understand the above Precept, by saying how I conducted myself in a Circumstance wherein Self-denial appear'd requisite and necessary to be put in Practice by me.

When I was conducted, by my great Leader, into the narrow Path of Self-denial, I was sensible that I must part with many hurtful and superfluous Things, I had been accustomed to; the Way was too narrow to admit of Pride in any Shape or Form; and as Superfluity in Apparel, as well as many other Instances of Luxury, appear'd to me inconsistent with the Doctrines of Christianity, and the more particular Instructions and Admonitions of several of the Apostles, I laid aside several Things I thought inconsistent with the Profession of a Christian;

Christian; and disused idle and unmeaning Compliments, and further, being convinced of the Principles of the *People called Quakers*, I joined to that Society. Thus I became singular, and consequently despicable to my Children, and some of my Acquaintance and Friends; who not only profess'd a Dislike, but a Concern that I should appear in so contemptible a Manner, and so very different from what I usually had done. Here I had a Cross to bear. What was now to be done! I was certain I had acted with Sincerity, and done, according to the best of my Understanding, what I apprehended the Duty of every common Christian, *viz.* To part with all Superfluities of Naughtiness, which were now beginning to be burthenome to me, as I gradually experienced, Old Things passing away, and New Desires and Affections to take Place in my Heart. I frequented the Meetings of these People, as I was convinced the Doctrines they taught, and their Mode of Worship, were free from Ceremonies and Superstition, and most agreeable to the Observations I had made in reading the sacred Writings, &c. and what was most valuable and worthy Imitation, that the true and genuine Members of this Society, walk consistently and agreeably to the Rules and Maxims of CHRIST and his Apostles. However, to be despised by my Acquaintance, Friends and Children, was a Trial hard to bear: But whosoever he be of you, *that taketh not up his Cross, and hateth not* (comparatively) *Father, Mother, Children, &c.* says our blessed LORD, *is not worthy of me, and cannot be my Disciple.*

And, though, in this Instance, I endeavoured to please God rather than Men, I'll venture to assert, that few have a more natural Tenderness, and affectionate Regard, in both, or all these Relations than myself. And, indeed, when the Love of God is received into our Hearts, 'tis so far from lessening or contracting our lawful Affections, that it enlarges our Hearts, in a peculiar Manner, to our Relatives and Friends; and excites in us a loving and benevolent Disposition towards all Mankind, whose Happiness we entirely wish: *For if any Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar; for he who loveth not his Brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?* And this Commandment we have from him, *That he who loveth God, will love his Brother also; and we love God because he first loved us:* Therefore, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another, and do Good to all; but, *more especially to the Household of Faith; with whom we are made one in CHRIST.*

But further, among many Instances of Self-denial, as I have above remark'd, I found Pride, in Apparel, absolutely necessary to be avoided; and tho' Pride, in every Species and Appearance, is abominable and odious in the Sight of the Almighty, yet it seems particularly against this Branch of it, that the Prophet *Isaiab* exclaims in his third Chapter: And, I am sorry to observe, that the Charge of this odious, as well as irrational Passion of the Mind, equally affects the Male, as the Female Part of my Species. *But what renders it the more notable, is, that we don't remark, in preceeding Ages, any Prohibition, in the Article of Apparel, ever so much as mention'd; or any Caution given to Men, to avoid Superfluity, or Gaiety, of this Kind;*

as if this Folly and Weakness, was indeed incident and peculiar to Women only.

And we may remark, from History, that wise Men always neglected and despised Gaiety in their Clothes; and, whenever any Vanity of this Sort appeared, tho' in young Men, it was look'd upon with Contempt, and derided by reasonable Men, who consider'd it as a Mark or Indication of weak Intellects.

But however that be, I shall take the Liberty of asking my own Sex, who seem most concerned in the Judgements pronounced by the Prophet against the Pride of Women, their Opinion of the Chapter I have mentioned. After the Prophet had been enumerating the great Disadvantages and Calamities the Children or People of *Israel* had brought upon themselves by their Sin and Disobedience, for which, he tells them, the LORD would assuredly enter into Judgment, by bringing these Calamities suddenly upon them; he adds, *Moreover, the LORD saith, because the Daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth Necks, and wanton Eyes, walking, and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their Feet: Therefore, in that Day (the Day of his Judgments) saith the LORD, I will take away the Bravery of their tinkling Ornaments from about their Feet, and their Cauls, and their round Tires like the Moon, the Chains, and the Bracelets, and the Mufflers, the Bonnets, and the Ornaments of the Legs, and the Head-bands, and the Tablets, and the Ear-rings, the Rings, and Nose-jewels, the changeable Suits of Apparel, and Mantles, and the Wimples, and the Crispin-pins, the Glasses, and the fine Linnen, the Hoods, and the Veils. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet Smells, there shall be a Stink; instead of a Girdle, a Rent; instead of well-set Hair, Baldness; instead of a Stomacher, a girding with Sack-cloth; and Burning, instead of Beauty.*

And hence let us observe the Effects of Pride, in Apparel too, which many think so insignificant; and some have been so absurd as to say, that the Ornaments, &c. enumerated by the Prophet, were only unlawful to the *Jewish* Women, who possibly had borrow'd their Fashions from the *Heathen*, with whom they were forbid any Sort of Commerce; neither were they to walk after the Customs and Manners of the *Heathen* Nations. But we may remark, these Things were not to be taken from them, because they had borrow'd the Forms of them from the neighbouring Nations; but because *the Daughters of Zion are proud and haughty, and walk with stretched-forth Necks*, when they are adorn'd with all the Bravery of these Ornaments; therefore the LORD will deprive them of the Thing they made subservient to their Pride and Vanity; the Sin of which is equally odious and abhorrent to God, in us, the Descendants of the *Gentiles*, as it was in the *Jews*: Nor does the Prohibition of Sin, or the Command or Precept of Holiness, lose one Wit of its Force and Energy, for being deliver'd two or three thousand, or seventeen hundred Years ago. As the Almighty is unchangeable in his essential Holiness; *for with Him is no Variableness, or Shadow of Turning*; Sin, that was Sin some Ages back, must absolutely be so at this Day.

But

But hear now what some of the Christian Apostles enjoin, when they were giving Directions to the Churches of *CHRIST*, 1 *Tim.* ii. 9. and which *Dr. Whitby* thus notes: *In like Manner also I will that Christian Women adorn themselves in modest Apparel, with Shamefacedness and Sobriety; not setting out themselves with broider'd Hair, or Gold, or Pearls, or costly Array; but with that Ornament, which best becomes Women professing Godliness; that is, with good Works.*

And next the Apostle *Peter*, in his particular Instructions to Christian Women, he thus expresses himself; *Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the Hair, and wearing Gold, or putting on of Apparel; but let it be with the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible. even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the Sight of God of great Price: For after this Manner, in the old Times, the holy Women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves.* And the above cited Author, in his Comment on the Words of both these Apostles, gives you his Sense thus: "It seems evident, that all Attire, which, by the Richness and Costliness of it, shews any Pride or Vanity of Spirit, or any Ambition to excel others, is forbid by the Apostle's Words: All great Concernment, Care and Study, to appear in such Attire, as if it were our truest Ornament, and that which made us excel, and be more honourable than others: This Vanity and Pride, this Esteem of, and Concern for, these Things, being not well consistent with Sobriety, and much less with the Profession of true Godliness. And here (*continues he*) 'tis worthy to be noted by the Women, that this Precept ought not to be slighted by them, as of little Moment, seeing it is so carefully inculcated by the two chief Apostles of the Jews and Gentiles, *St. Peter* and *St. Paul.* And the contrary is represented as a Practice opposite to Godliness: *And he subjoins:* Let them especially remark the Character here given of a Christian Woman, *viz.* That she is one who does not only profess and declare, that she serves and worships God; but also doth shew forth Godliness in her Life and Conversation. And let the Men note hence, that if it be so unbecoming a Christian Woman to be thus concern'd in adorning and tricking up her Body, it must be much more unbecoming a Christian Man to put on such Attire, which makes him truly deserve the Name of Pop."

And next let us hear the Opinion of one of the Antients, *viz. Clemens of Alexandria*; he tells us, "That Women, who wear Gold, and plait the Hair, have not the Image of God in the inward Man; and that the apostolical Constitutions forbid Women to wear exquisite Garments, which were fitted to deceive, or Gold Rings, &c."

And *Jamblicus*, in the Life of *Pythagoras*, says, "That no free Women wore Gold, but lewd Women only."

Hence you may observe, that the People called *Quakers*, are not singular in the Construction they put on, or Sense they consider the Apostle's Words in, in the Article of Apparel; and that our Particularity in this Matter does not proceed from Whim, Caprice, or

Fancy, or any Affectation of being singular; but from a Conviction in our own Understanding, that Superfluity and Luxury, which has its Rise from Pride, is inconsistent and contrary to the humble, lowly, unambitious Temper and Spirit of Christianity.

One Argument some have made use of to support the Vanity of gay and costly Clothing, was this; That the Pride was not in the Clothes, but in the Heart: An Assertion I have greatly prov'd true by my own Experience. I could not imagine there could be any moral or inherent Evil in a Piece of gay Silk; for I know full well, that Pride proceeds from a vain and ambitious Heart; and that if it had not its Residence and Seat there, it would not appear in the Habit or Garb. But tho' some perhaps may allow me to be acquainted with, and therefore a Judge of my own Heart; yet, wou'd it not border upon Uncharitableness, to alledge that all Persons who wear gay Clothing, are consequently proud and ambitious? I answer; Tho' it may not be safe to judge in every Case according to the Sight of the Eye, yet our Lord seems to allow us the Evidence of our Senses pretty generally. *Every Tree, says he, is known by its Fruit. Of Thorns Men do not gather Figs, nor off a Bramble-bush Grapes.* And then gives us the following Mark or Criterion to judge by, *Ye shall know them by their Fruits.* Thus when I see Fruits of the same Kind produced by others, which I certainly know proceeded from the bitter Root of Pride in my own Heart, I do not think it an uncharitable, but a natural and rational Conclusion, that they spring from the like evil Root in others. *A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit. A good Man, out of the good Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth that which is good; but an evil Man, out of the evil Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth that which is evil.*

I have heard it objected, that Persons, who have always been accustomed to Finery from their Infancy, are not commonly proud of it; it becomes thereby so familiar to them, that they have not such high Thoughts of themselves when gaily attir'd as many imagine; neither value Dress and splendid Equipages, &c. at so high a Rate, as those do to whom they have not been so habitual; this I have thought may be partly true; but notwithstanding I have consider'd, that tho' these Things are habitual and familiar to many, yet People of this Character are not so ignorant, as not to be sensible that they are respected and courted according to the Appearance they make in the World; and should any One propose to such to lay aside their Splendor and Gaiety, we should soon see these Matters are not so indifferent to them as some may think; they only seem more careless and easy about them, because they have been accustomed to Pride of this Sort longer than others, and therefore less affected with it, having better learn'd the Art to conceal it: And if every One would be so just to themselves, as candidly and impartially to enquire and ask their own Hearts, from whence proceeds their Fondness for Splendor, Shew and Pomp, especially in this Article, they would be obliged to confess, or at least not to deny, that Pride was at the Bottom.

Part of a Conversation I happen'd to have with a fashionable Woman in *Great-Britain*, will serve to confirm what I have observ'd. She asserted she was free from Pride, tho' she did adorn herself in a gay and splendid Manner. I ask'd her if she could be as well satisfied and content in a plain Dress, and Stuff or Woollen Gown, as with the gay Silks she usually wore? She answer'd, yes. I queried why she then dress'd so gay? She answer'd, that she might appear agreeable to others. I ask'd her why she was so much concern'd to please others with her fine Clothes, &c. She said, it was least she should be despis'd for the Meaness of her Appearance. I ask'd her whence proceeded that Fear? Here, I think, she was silent, being reduced to an Extremity, which proved the Source of her Vanity to be nothing less than Pride, in spite of all her boasted Humility. I have often thought, our Fondness for Trifles, Pomp, Shew and Noise, may be attributed to Inconsideration: For did we reflect, examine and compare Things, we should certainly make very different Deductions, Conclusions, and Estimations, from what the Generality of Mankind are wont to do. And I am certain, from our Ignorance of Divine and Heavenly Things, proceeds our Fondness and inordinate Desires for sensual and earthly Pleasures and Enjoyments. And indeed since I have thought at all, I mean to any good Purpose, I have been amazed at my own Stupidity and Folly, when I have consider'd and recollected how anxious I had formerly been till I was in Possession of this gay Silk, and the other fine Lace; and I have blush'd with an holy Shame, when I reflected how I had sometimes doated on a Ribbon, or any other Toy or Bauble, that had but the Title of *new-fashion'd* annex'd to it! One common Argument for Superfluity and Luxury of all Kinds, is, that it encourages and supports Trade; and that the Bread and Subsistence of Thousands depend on new Fashions: But those who offer this Reason, do not consider how many, on the contrary, are ruin'd and undone by contributing to what is alledged the Support of Trade; this being so manifest, especially in *Great-Britain*, that it needs no other Proof but the Evidence of our Eyes, if we will but look round and consider how many Families are reduced to Poverty, Wretchedness and Misery, from this very Source Pride, from whence spring Luxury, in all its hideous Forms and Shapes. The Disorder, as a late Writer observes, is become *almost epidemical*, as the inferior Class of People endeavour all in their Power to appear as grand and fashionable as their Superiors. And when I have consider'd, how usual it is for the lower Part of Mankind to be sway'd by the Example of the Higher, I have thought it greatly behoved People of Rank and Condition to exhibit Patterns of Humility, Temperance, Sobriety and Moderation, with every other Christian Virtue, to their Inferiors. But I have heard it objected, that costly and splendid Apparel, &c. is necessary to make and support a proper Distinction between Persons of high and low Degree. The Argument I have thought weak, and unworthy to be offer'd by a Christian, as I am of Opinion, every reasonable Person will grant, that Piety and Virtue (not Gold and

Tinsel Ornaments) ought to distinguish and render truly honourable the higher Rank of People. Besides, it is evident, that these Distinctions are not kept up and maintain'd by costly Attire, &c. for we may daily observe, that Persons of the lowest Rank, with Respect to their Offices and Employments, are oftentimes very wealthy; and these adorn themselves in as pompous a Manner, and have as grand Houses, Furniture, Equipages, &c. as those who are greatly superior to them in other Respects.

But allowing many Things the Title of Superfluity and Luxury, and therefore unlawful to be used by Christians; it has been queried how are all these Fashion-mongers, who are supported by making and vending Things of this Nature, to be provided for, if they should give up their Employments, which you *Quakers* say, are contrary to Christianity, and therefore unlawful? I would first humbly propose to People to examine themselves, and see if they are Christians; not nominal, but real Christians; such as are led, ruled, guided and directed by the Spirit of CHRIST; those who are not, are none of his, whatever they may pretend to; *for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they (and they only) are the Children of God.* These will find, that it is not lawful for them to support any Trade, or use any Employment, which is inconsistent, or clashes with the Doctrines and Rules they profess to be govern'd by; such are not often at a Loss for some lawful Calling or Business, whereby they may obtain Food and Raiment, with which they are content; Religion has bounded their Desires, and they greatly experience, that the Happiness of a Christian's Life does not consist in the Abundance of this World's Goods. I have the Authority of a Clergyman for what I am now going to mention, *viz.* "That all those who profess themselves Christians, should, in all their Actions, consequently in their Callings or Professions of Business, ask themselves this necessary Question, "Can I do this Thing as a Christian? Or, is it consistent with the Principles and Precepts of my Christian Profession?" And if upon a serious and sincere Examination, we find that the Calling or Employment on which our Bread depends, be in any wise contrary to the Precepts of CHRIST, and the Example he left us to follow; if it be either directly or indirectly so, I believe we are culpable if we don't leave off. For CHRIST tells us, if *our Right Hand offend us*, or cause us to act any Thing against his Laws, *we must cut it off*; we must quit whatsoever causes this Offence, how near, dear, and useful soever it be to us, as 'tis better to enter into Life halt and maimed, than having two Hands to be cast into Hell-fire.

I am not insensible, that what I have here offered will be thought hard Sayings by many; but for our Encouragement our blessed LORD assures us, *That any One who hath forsaken any temporal Advantage or Enjoyment, as Houses, Lands, Father, Mother, Wife or Children, Brethren or Sisters, for his Sake and the Gospel's, shall receive an Hundred fold in this World, and in that to come Life everlasting.* For Godliness hath the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come. We have not only an Hundred-fold of Peace in our Bosoms,

soms, viz. The Comforts of an upright Conscience (a greater Blessing than any we have parted with) and spiritual Bread to eat, which the World knows not of; but our natural Bread is made sure, and Water fails not; for the Lord oftentimes casts away the Substance of the Wicked, yet he rarely suffers the Souls of the Righteous to famish.

Agreeable to this the royal Prophet speaks, *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I never seen the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging Bread.* And again, he exhorts to "trust in the Lord and do Good, and thou shalt dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed." And further, he calls to his People to fear the Lord, and believe in him; "Believe in him, and he will help thee, and order thy Way aright; fear and trust in him, and your Reward shall not fail." He shall save them, because they put their Trust in him; for look at the Generations of old, and see, Did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded? Or, did any abide in his Fear, and was forsaken? Or, whom did he ever despise that call'd upon his Name in Truth, Sincerity and Uprightness? But supposing that Christians, as a Tryal of their Faith, may sometimes be reduced to great outward Distress, which may possibly be permitted to extend to want of Bread, &c. *yet shall Famine, or Nakedness, or Persecution, or Distress, &c. separate us (Christians) from the Love of God?* No, surely; *These (comparatively) light Afflictions, which we suffer for a Moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory,* 2 Cor. iv. 17. For tho' the spiritual Exercises, as well as temporal Troubles of the Righteous, may be many, yet the Lord delivereth out of them all. And then can we say upon the Banks of Deliverance, "We will love the Lord our Salvation, he having been our Strength and our Shield, and done great Things for us; therefore will we be thankful to his Name, and rejoice in his Power: For who among the Gods (or Idols many make to themselves) is like unto our God! Let us therefore ascribe Strength and Power to God; for his Name is glorious in Holiness; he is fearful in Praises, and a God that has indeed wrought Wonders for us." Thus are we excited to love God, who first loved us, and has called us to Glory, which we have beheld, as of the Glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of Grace and Truth, of whom we have received Grace for Grace; and having thus seen his Glory, our Hearts are overcome with his Beauty, and we endeavour to return in our Measure, Love for Love, and can now say in Truth and Sincerity, *Whom have we in Heaven but thee, and there is nothing that we desire on Earth in Comparison of thee? Thou art indeed become the Chief among ten Thousand to our Souls.* Thus the truly Godly love God above all earthly Considerations, and in the highest Degree.

The Love of God, says a pious Writer, is of so noble a Nature, that the Mediocrity, which in other Passions is an Excellence, is here an Imperfection. The Man, after God's own Heart, is not afraid to own to his Maker an Ardency of Love, which he expresses by the significant Metaphor of Thirst, My Soul is athirst for God, &c. Other Passions like other Rivers, are best liked, when they flow within their wonted Banks.

Banks; but the Love of God, as of the River Nile, the Overflowing makes it the more welcome.

The royal Prophet indeed discovers often a fervent Love to, and Desire after, the Enjoyment of God's holy Presence: So he no less esteemed his Precepts; agreeable to what our blessed LORD said in After-ages to his Disciples, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* I hate, says David, *vain Thoughts, but thy Law do I love; for how sweet are thy Words to my Taste? Yea, sweeter than Honey to my Mouth. I love thy Commandments above Gold, yea, I esteem them above fine Gold. Thy Testimonies have I taken for an Heritage, for they are the rejoicing of my Heart. Thy Testimonies are my Delight, and my Counsellors. I delight to do thy Will, O my God! yea, thy Law is within my Heart,* Psalm cxix. The Apostle Paul also delighted in the Law of God after the inner Man: And agreeably, the Righteous, in all Ages, decline not from the Commandments of his Lips, but esteem the Words of his Mouth more than necessary Food.

But let none imagine, that tho' it is our Duty to love God with all our Heart, Soul and Strength, above every Consideration, and with the greatest Ardency, that this Injunction clashes with, or hinders our exerting this Duty of Love in it's full Force in every natural and social Relation; as it is not the same Species of Love with which we love God, as that we extend to our Neighbour, Children, &c. For as God is an infinitely perfect Being, and happy in his own Perfections, we cannot add to his Happiness by wishing well to him; therefore we cannot love him with the Love of Benevolence or Beneficence, with which we love our Neighbour, &c. but with the Love of Desire, desiring to be with him, and to partake of his Fullness, agreeable to what the royal Prophet speaks, *One Thing have I desired, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House (or Presence) of the LORD for ever; to behold the Beauty of the LORD, and to worship in his Temple!*—A religious Soul, says one, may obey the Command of loving God intirely, tho' she allows her Affections other Objects, provided they be kept in a due Subordination, and from entering into Competition with that Love which ought to be appropriated to God.

The Apostle Peter loved God above all earthly Considerations, when he refused to obey the High Priest, who charged him with the other Apostles, that they should not teach in the Name of CHRIST: He answer'd and said, *We ought to obey God rather than Man.* Tho' in so doing they incur'd the Displeasure of Men, and were in Danger of losing not only their Liberty, but even their Lives; nevertheless, say they, *we cannot but speak the Things which we have seen and heard* (and for which Purpose we have been immediately commission'd by our great Master himself) viz. *That by us Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preach'd in his Name among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

And the Apostle Paul expresses the greatest, as well as the most fervent Love to God, when he thus queries, *Who (or what Consideration) shall separate us from the Love of God in CHRIST JESUS, our LORD? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Peril,*

Peril, or Sword? No; in all these Things we are more than Conquerors thro' CHRIST, who hath loved us! Therefore I am perswaded, that neither Life nor Death, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Heights (of Prosperity) nor Depths (of Adversity) nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us (Christians) from the Love of God. And indeed those inferior Interests bear no sort of Proportion to the superior Advantage of supreme and heavenly Enjoyments; they being of so precious a Nature, enough to engage us to court Heaven, at the Rate of renouncing for them all those unmanly Sensualities, and trifling Vanities, for which inconsiderate Mortals are wont to forfeit the Interest their Saviour so dearly purchased for them.

And as I have elsewhere said, we may attribute all the sordid Vices and growing Follies, which the Generality of People indulge themselves in, to Inconsideration, as we don't enough examine and compare the fading Enjoyments of this Life, with the permanent Blessings of an happy Eternity; if we did, we should soon discover the great Disproportion, and willingly part with all sinful and transitory Pleasures.

And when I have been reflecting that Vice and Luxury, in every Branch of it, abounds not only in *Great-Britain*, where I have so lately, and so frequently, lamented this epidemical Disorder, among People, who nevertheless assume the Title of Christians, and Disciples of CHRIST, without rememb'ring, that all who take that sacred Name upon them, must depart from all Iniquity. (CHRIST came to redeem us from all Sin, and to purify to himself a *peculiar People, zealous of good Works*;) I say, when I have observed that Vice, Softness, Effeminacy and Luxury, of most Kinds, has every where sown its noxious Seeds, which flourish in most Climes or Countries, my Soul shrinks at the Thought of the Possibility, not to say Probability and Danger (without timely Repentance and Amendment of Life) of careless, negligent and voluptuous Sinners, being precipitated from a Life of Ease, Security and Diversion, to a State of endless Woe and Misery! From the Conversation of wanton and gay Companions, to associate with wicked and unhappy Spirits: whose melancholy Bemoanings, and bitter Cries and Complaints, will be far different from the melodious Strains of Musick the Ears of the Voluptuous have been accusom'd to: Therefore it greatly behoves Sinners to make a suitable Preparation for the trying Time of Death, least it surprize them at unawares; and the unhappy and dreadful Season approach, wherein it will be said to him that is filthy, *Be filthy still*. Thus will Fearfulness seize the Hypocrite, and Sinners will be ashamed of the Idols they once delighted in, and then will they cast the whole Train of them to the Moles, and to the Batts.

But after all that can be said against Pride or Vice, of what Nature soever, the strong Man arm'd will keep Possession of your Hearts, till you suffer a stronger than he to enter, and turn him out, and spoil his Goods. Those Sins which do let or hinder your coming to God, will let, till you permit them to be removed. Every wild Olive-

tree

tree of Vice and Folly will grow and flourish, till you find it your Interest, and a Necessity of being ingrafted into the true Vine and Nature of CHRIST, and suffer him to lay the Ax of his Power to the Root of the old and corrupt Tree, and then will every Branch of Pride and Wickedness fall of Course. Therefore, as One who has obtain'd Mercy, in having a Sight offered me, to see the Things that make for my everlasting Felicity, I wou'd recommend to you to consider of these Things. It was the great Loss and Disadvantage, as well as Folly of the Children of *Israel*, that they neglected the great Law of Consideration, which occasioned the Almighty thus to lament; *O that my People were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter End!* But, further, as I have above occasionally mentioned Musick, which before I had only considered promiscuously, as an Attendant at Balls, &c. I shall now observe, that it was a Science I formerly greatly delighted in, and spent much Time, both in the Theory, as well as in the practical Part: But when Religion began to take Place in my Heart, I found Musick stood in my Way, and I consider'd it only as an Amusement, which detain'd me from more solid and useful Thoughts and Reflections: In short, it became so burthensome to me, that I could not perform any of my airy Lessons, which had been usual, as well as pleasing to me: And on further Consideration it appears to me to be a merely sensual, and not an intellectual Pleasure (as some would fondly assert) therefore I quitted the Study, as well as Practice of it, for what I now esteem'd a more useful, profitable and rational Science, *viz.* The Study and Knowledge of my own Heart, which I have found worth all I knew of the other seven. But further, on perusing the sacred Writings, I do not remember to have read of one Christian Musician in all the New-Testament: And in reading the Old, it appears that the Prophet *Amos*, describing the Wantonness of the Children of *Israel*, and enumerating the many Instances of their Luxury, he mentions Musick as a Mark of Levity and Wantonness; *They chant, says he, to the Sound of the Viol, and invent to themselves Instruments of Musick like David; but they are not grieved for the Affliction of Joseph.* And the Prophet *Isaiab* denounces a Woe against them; adding, *the Harp, and the Viol, the Tabret, and Pipe, and Wine, are in their Feasts; but they regard not the Work of the LORD, neither do they consider the Operation of his Hands; not being moved with the Calamities of the suffering Part of Mankind, To long as they can enjoy Ease and Plenty.*

And now hear what the Bishop of *Cambray* says on the Subject of Musick. 'As for Musick, it is well known, that the Ancients believed nothing more pernicious to a well regulated State, than to suffer an effeminate Melody to be introduced into it: It enervates Men and renders their Souls soft and voluptuous: Languishing Strains are only pleasant, because the Soul gives itself up to the Charms of the Senses; and this, adds he, was one of their most important Policies.' Plato, in the like Manner, 'severely rejects all the soft Airs of the *Aftrick* Musick; and with much greater Reason Christians who

' who never ought to seek Pleasure for Pleasure's Sake, ought surely
' to have an Aversion for those poison'd Allurements.'

I have been the larger in my Observations on Diversions and Recreations, which, by most People, are consider'd as innocent Amusements; as they seem to be most hurtful and dangerous. Many Inconveniencies, as well as unlawful Things, creep into the Hearts and Conduct of People, under the specious Title of *Harmless Pleasures*.

Poole, in his Annotations on the Bible, tells us, when discoursing on the Lawfulness of earthly Enjoyments, 'Tis to be fear'd, more
' Souls miss of Heaven and Happiness, by indulging and allowing
' themselves in Things deemed lawful, than by committing gross and
' enormous Evils; these, many shrink at with Horror; but those
' Things consider'd lawful, which sometimes becomes circumstanti-
' ally unlawful, and Pleasures term'd innocent, are used and embrac-
' ed without Fear or Caution; and, with all their Train of mischie-
' vous Consequences.'

For this Reason I have also dwelt the longer on Pride in Apparel; yet I am not insensible that it appears in many other Forms besides that, or what I am going to mention, *viz.*

That all true Christians consider it as an Evil, when it discovers itself in Houses, Equipages, Furniture, or our Tables: As one who is endued with the Christian Virtue of Humility, discovers it in every Action, or Thing, that he has the ordering and conducting of: Always keeping in Memory the Assertion of the Apostle *Paul*, *He that strives for the Mastery, or runs so as to obtain, is temperate in all Things*. And as he is temperate in the Use and Enjoyment of the Things of this Life, so is a true Christian moderate in his Desires and Pursuits after worldly Riches and Profits; he makes not Haste to be rich; his greatest Concern and principal Care, agreeable to our Lord's Direction and Advice, is, *First to seek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*; to lay up a good Foundation against the Time to come; a permanent Inheritance, which fadeth not away: And as Heaven is the End of his Hope and Desires, he is careful to lay up Treasure there; using the perishing Enjoyments of the Things of this Life, with as little Concern, and as much Indifference, as if he used them not, for this great and good Reason, "Because the Fashion of them passeth away!" On the contrary, how do we observe the sordid Worldling, pursuing with Eagerness, Sollicitude and Warmth, the perishing Riches of this Life? And, in direct Opposition to our Lord's Precept, they seek first, and principally, the Things of this World, which he exhorts us not to be greatly anxious or thoughtful about; but to such as seek first his Kingdom, and the Righteousness thereof, he assures us, *all these Things* (that are needful for our Support) *shall be added*.

Nevertheless, when we come to reason with People of this Character, who so ready to confess, and assent to the following Truths?
"That as we are in this uncertain and passing Situation, 'tis great Folly and Stupidity to be over anxious and immoderate in our Pur-
suits

suits after Wealth, or to be so very careful as some are, in making large Provision for these mortal Bodies; laying up Goods for many Years; whereas we have no continuing City here; that 'tis appointed to all Men once to die, and we know not how soon we shall be summon'd to Judgment, to render an Account of the Deeds done in those frail Bodies." Yet what has been Matter of Astonishment to me, is, that this very Body, which People profess in Words to make so little Account of, when they reflect on the Shortness of its Continuance here in this Life, engrosses the whole Care: "What we shall eat, what we shall drink, and wherewith shall we be clothed?" appears to be the chief Concern of the Generality of Mankind. Not that I think the Body should be excluded from a necessary and proper Proportion of our Care and Dilligence; as it would be absurd and irrational to suppose our Bodies can subsist without suitable Care and Provision: On the contrary, it is every Man's indispensable Duty to provide a Subsistence for himself and his Household; such who do not, are consider'd by the Apostle worse than *Infidels*; *having, by this Neglect, denied their Faith in CHRIST*; But then let it be a rational, moderate and Christian Care; let the Things appertaining to this Life have their just and proper Place in our Affections; and not rebelliously and unnaturally usurp an Authority Almighty Wisdom thought fit to invest his Creature Man with, at the Time when he presented him with the Creation, and put it under his Subjection, saying, *Have thou Dominion over every living Thing, &c. and subdue the Earth*. Here was all sublunary and earthly Objects placed under our Feet; that the Creatures were, by the Wisdom and Order of God, placed in Subordination and Subjection to us, to be our Servants, not our LORDS (that our Reason should rule them, not they govern our Reason) which they immediately become, when we make an unlawful and improper Use of them; and which we certainly do, when we employ them to fulfil the sinful Lusts and Vanities of the Flesh.

And further, is it not Matter of Wonder and Amazement, Compassion and Lamentation, to observe so little Provision made for, or Concern employ'd about the immortal Soul, which must absolutely and certainly have an eternal Existence, either in Bliss or Misery? And tho' many who pretend to Religion and Virtue, acknowledge that our Felicity consists in rightly knowing, truly loving, and reverently serving the Supreme Being: And that Obedience, Submission and Resignation to his divine Will and holy Commands, is the highest Point of Wisdom, and indispensable Duty of all rational Minds; yet how small the Proportion of those who act agreeable to this Confession, to those, by far the greater Number, who inconsiderately and blindly follow the dark Imaginations of their own Will and Affections? This Consideration is indeed Subject of Mourning to those whose Eyes and Understandings the Almighty has mercifully opened by the Hand of his divine Power, and assisted by the Light of his Grace, to see their own Mistakes; and has graciously afforded his holy Aid and Instruction, by which they were enabled to rectify them. These,
 seeing

seeing the manifold Dangers all who are in a State of Sin and Forgetfulness of God are obnoxious to, are concerned to discover and point out the dangerous Rocks such must inevitably fall on, if they continue to pursue the perilous Course of Sin and Folly; and to mark out, as far as they are enabled, the Way and Means by which they may escape the Pollution of, and Punishment due to Sin; and obtain Acceptance with the Almighty, *viz.* "Repentance towards God, Faith in JESUS CHRIST, and, by the Assistance of his holy Spirit, a constant and consistent Walking in the Paths of Virtue and Holiness:" For we are not so ignorant as not to know, that his Will concerning us, is our Sanctification: And that we may not be led astray, nor be deceived by the grand Adversary of our Soul's Happiness, our merciful and benign Creator, knowing our Weakness and Inability to perform any good Action, or to resist the least Temptation, by any Strength or Power of our own, without the Instruction, Aid and Assistance of his Almighty Arm, has provided us a Leader and Conductor, who is mighty to save, and able to deliver to the Uttermost, all who come to him with full Faith in his Power. We must, as the blind Man did (who came to CHRIST to have his Eyes open'd) believe that he is able to do the same great Work for us in a spiritual Sense, which he perform'd for him in a natural; and also say, with the Leper, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*; and as CHRIST's Office was also to open the Prison Doors, and to let the Captives go free; All you who may be in cruel Bondage, held in Captivity by Sin and Satan, as it were, by Chains of gross Darkness, if you are but willing to be released from this Slavery, apply to CHRIST, who is able to bind the strong Man armed, to spoil his Goods, and to expel him out of your Hearts. Are you willing to be free? CHRIST our LORD proclaims a *Year of Jubilee*; wherein he is ready and willing to set you free on easy Terms, *viz.* "Love and Obedience to his Will, whose Service is perfect Freedom; for if CHRIST make you free, then shall you be free indeed; when the Law of the Spirit of Life in CHRIST JESUS hath made you free from the Law of Sin and Death, and brought you into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God; glorious Privilege indeed! Behold the stupendous Love of the Father, and the Dignity he bestows upon "those that are led by his Spirit, "that they shall be called the Sons of God! and if Sons, then "Heirs, Joint Heirs with CHRIST, *Rom. viii. 14. 17.*" of the Kingdom he hath promised to them that love and obey him. And permit me to assure you, from my own happy Experience; (which I would always mention with Humility and Reverence, never, I hope, forgetting, that what I am, I am *by the Grace of God*) "That who-
"soever looketh into this perfect Law of Liberty, and continueth
"therein, this Man shall be blessed in his Deed, *Isa. i. 25.*" For the Effect of Obedience to the royal Law of God, is Quietness and Assurance forever; which will afford us a well-grounded Hope of Acceptance with the Almighty, agreeable to the Apostle, "Beloved, if
'our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards

GOD, 1 *John* iii. 21.' And the Reason he assign is, 'Because we keep his Commandments, and this is his Commandment, That we should believe on the Name or Power of his Son CHRIST JESUS, ver 23.' And you know that he was manifested to take away our Sins. But if any one ask, How shall I apply to CHRIST, or where shall I go to meet with Him; since some say, Lo, here is CHRIST; and others, Lo, he is there?

Hear now where the Apostle Paul directs all such Enquirers; 'Say not in thine Heart, who shall ascend into Heaven? that is, to bring CHRIST down from above: Or who shall descend into the Deep? that is, to bring CHRIST again from the Dead (for the Righteousness, which is of Faith, speaketh on this wise) The Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth, and in thine Heart, that is the Word of Faith which we preach, *Rom. x. 6. 7. 8.*'

And this is the Law and new Covenant the Prophet *Jeremiah* foretold GOD would make with his People, which in these latter Days, or Gospel Dispensation, our great Legislator puts into the Hearts of Mankind, and writes in the most secret Recesses of our Consciences; instructing us more immediately in our Duty, and saying to the Unrighteous and Disobedient, 'This is the Way, not that which thou art walking in, of Sin and Folly; but this is the Way, the Way of Righteousness, Holiness, and Obedience to all God's Commands; for the Commandment is a Lamp, and the Law is Light; and the Reproofs of Instruction is the Way to Life, *Prov. vi. 23.*'

In this Way and Light the Righteous are careful to walk; 'the Law of his GOD being in his Heart (if strictly adhered to) none of his Steps shall slide, *Psalms xxxvii. 31.*'

To the Truth and Extension of this Light, or Grace of CHRIST's Holy Spirit, in our Hearts, 'this more sure Word of Prophecy,' the Apostle Paul bears ample Testimony, as I have elsewhere noted, in these Words; 'The Grace of GOD, that brings Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, teaching us that denying Ungodliness, and the World's Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World, *Titus ii. 11, 12.*'

With this Testimony of the Light the Liturgy of the Church of England concurs. * GOD, who at this Time didst teach the Hearts of thy faithful People, by sending to them the Light of thy Holy Spirit; grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right Judgment in all Things; and evermore rejoice in his holy Comfort. And in the Litany: † May it please thee to endue us with the Grace of thy Holy Spirit: Let us beseech GOD to grant us true Repentance, and his Holy Spirit, that those Things may please him that we do at present, and that the rest of our Lives may be pure and holy. ‡ Forasmuch, O GOD, as without thee we are not able to please thee, grant that thy Holy Spirit may, in all Things, rule our Hearts; and because of the Weakness of our mortal Nature, we can do no good Thing without thee, grant us the Help of thy Grace, that, in keeping thy Commandments, we may please thee, both in Will and in Deed.

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* Col. Whit. Sun.

† Absolution.

‡ Col. 19 Sund. Trin.

Therefore as the * Discourses and Prayers of others abound with Testimonies to the Necessity of Christians being led and guided, and influenced by the Spirit or Grace of God; which we sometimes express by the Scripture and significant Metaphor, of *Light*; Why should this Doctrine, or these Terms, be considered and ridiculed as Absurdities in our Words or Writings; since we understand and use them in the same Sense and Acceptation, and pray for the Illumination and Aid of the Holy Spirit, for the same good Purpose, *viz. To give us a right Judgment in all Things.* And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Understanding. ' We know that he is come by the Gift of his Holy Spirit sent into our Hearts; which shews us all that we do, or ever have done — This is he of a Truth, whom the Prophets and primitive Christians bore Testimony to; By his Heart-searching Power, we know him; nor can we mistake him for another: And as he thus knows the Secrets of all Hearts, and will judge them with righteous Judgment, in the Day God has appointed for it; the only Way for us to be happy here, as well as hereafter, is to obey the Dictates of this most holy Gift; and refrain from every Thing it reproves for; and we, as well as those in the Apostle's Time, shall feel the Peace of God to fill our Hearts and Minds. This Holy Gift therefore is the Power of Godliness, which the Apostle foresaw some would deny, tho' they retain'd the Form of it: To deny therefore this Influence, is to deny one of the essential Benefits of CHRIST's Death and Mediation; for he leading Captivity Captive, that is, the Power of Hell, Death and the Grave, ascended up on high, and mediated and obtained these divine Gifts for Man; and as the Grave could not hold Captive the Body of this Holy One, so neither can the Heaven of Heavens contain or limit his spiritual Influence; by which his Ministers and Servants receive Power, Knowledge and Wisdom. Men may, with as good a Grace, go about to deny the Influence of the Sun by its Light and Heat, as that of God upon Man. But poor, proud, finite Man, because he cannot comprehend the Mode and Manner of it, would as presumptuously as injuriously (to himself) deny it. Whereas he can't so much as understand or comprehend the Manner of the natural Sun's emitting its Rays of Light and Heat, tho' he daily sees and feels the Necessity and Benefit of them: How much more stupendously sublime and incomprehensible is the Diffusion of the Holy Spirit! 'Tis sufficient for us finite Creatures, to feel the Effects of it, as we do of the Sun, without comprehending the Manner of its Emanation. As the powerful Operation and Motions of God's Spirit, quickening the Heart towards God, are compared to the blowing of the Wind; for as it is by the Wind, Man perceives the Effect of it, that there is such a Thing, and that it does blow; yet his Power cannot restrain it; neither can his Reason reach to know, whence it rises, or how far it comes, or how far it reaches. However, it is fit to be observed, that God does not act by a coercive

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or compulsive Power ; but as he has given Men spiritual Gifts, so he has given them spiritual Faculties to use them, as well as natural Ones : But if Men will not hear, the Consequence is naturally follows, as in any other Case, God remaining invariably the same, and without the least Shadow of turning.

I shall now produce another Testimony to the Truth of the Operation of God's Spirit in Man, which the Archbishop of *Cambray* gives us in the following Words ; ' By Scripture 'tis certain that the Spirit of God dwells in us ; that it acts there, that it prays there continually, that it groans there, desires there ; that it asketh for us, what we know not how to ask for ourselves ; that it excites us, animates us, speaks to us in Silence, suggests all Truths to us, and unites us to itself, that we become one Spirit with God : This is what Scripture teacheth ; this is what the Doctors who are farthest off to inward Life, cannot but acknowledge : And yet, notwithstanding their Principles, we always see by their Practice, that they suppose the outward written Law, or, at most, a Light drawn from Scripture and Reason, to be what enlightens us inwardly ; and that it is not our Reason afterwards which acts of itself by that Instruction. These Men set not enough by the inward Teacher, the Holy Spirit, who does all in us ; he is the Soul of our Souls ; we cannot frame a Thought, or create a Desire, but through him. Alas ! how great is our Blindness ! We make account as if we were by ourselves in this inward Sanctuary ; but, on the contrary, God is there more nearly than we ourselves are. Perhaps you will say to me, What then, are we all inspired ? Yes, without Doubt ; but not as the Prophets and Apostles were. Without the actual Inspiration of the Spirit of Grace, we can neither believe, will, nor do any Good. We are therefore always inspired ; but we stifle this Inspiration continually. God ceases not to speak ; but the Noise and Hurry of Things without, and our Passions within, deafen us and hinder us from hearing Him. We must silence every Creature, and ourselves too, to hear in a profound Stillness of Soul, the inexpressible Voice of CHRIST, the Bridegroom of our Souls. We must listen dilligently ; for 'tis a very still and soft Voice, which is not to be heard, but by such as hearken to nothing else. O how seldom is the Soul silent to let God speak ! The least Whisper of our vain Desires, or of Self-love, attentive on Self, confounds all the Words of the Spirit of God. We hear plainly what he speaks, and that he asks for something ; but we don't perceive what it is ; and very often we are contented not to understand it. The least Reserve, the least Regard for Self, the least Fear of understanding too plainly, that God asks for more than we care to give Him, disturbs this inward Voice. Shall we wonder then that so many, and even pious Persons, but full of amusing Thoughts, vain Desires, worldly Wisdom, and Confidence in their own Virtues, can't hear it ; but take this inward Voice to be a Chimera of Fanaticks ! Alas, what do they mean by such scornful Language ? To what Purpose would the outward Expressions of Teachers be, and even of the Scriptures themselves, if it were not for the inward Voice of the

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* Holy Spirit ; which gives the other all its Efficacy. The outward
 * Words of the Gospel itself, without this living, efficacious Word
 * within, would be but an empty Sound. 'Tis the Letter that kil-
 * leth, but the Spirit giveth Life. O eternal and All-powerful
 * Word of the Father ! 'tis thou who speakest in the very Bottom of our
 * Souls. The Words that proceeded out of the Mouth of our Savi-
 * our, when upon Earth, had not been productive of so much Vir-
 * tue and so great Fruits, but because they were animated by this
 * Word of Life, which is the Word himself.

* This made Peter say, LORD, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the
 * Words of eternal Life ! Therefore it is not the exterior Law or
 * Rule of the Gospel, which GOD lets us see by the Light of Rea-
 * son and Scripture ; 'tis his Spirit that speaks, that teaches, that
 * operates in, and animates us ; so 'tis the Spirit that worketh in us,
 * both to will and to do what is good ; as 'tis our Soul that animates
 * our Body, and regulates its Motions : 'Tis certain therefore that
 * we are all inspir'd continually ; that we live not the Life of
 * Grace, but in Proportion as we partake of this inward Inspi-
 * ration. These Positions and Principles being laid, it must be ac-
 * knowledged, that GOD speaks continually in us : He speaks in
 * harden'd and impenitent Sinners ; but they being stunn'd, as it
 * were, by the Noise of the World, and their Passions, cannot hear
 * his Voice ; 'tis to them a Tale or Fiction : He speaks in penitent
 * Sinners, they feel a Remorse of Conscience, and that Remorse is
 * the Voice of GOD, which reproaches them inwardly for their Sins :
 * When these Sinners are effectually reached and smitten, they find
 * no Difficulty in understanding this secret Voice ; for 'tis that which
 * smites them so sharply ; 'tis in them the *Two-edged Sword* St. Paul
 * speaks of, which divides asunder Soul and Spirit. GOD makes him-
 * self to be felt, tasted, and obeyed : They hear this soft Voice, which
 * gently smites them in the very secret of their Hearts, and the Heart
 * is tendered and broken ; and that is true Contrition : GOD speaks
 * in enlightened and learned Persons, whose Lives are to Appearance,
 * exact and regular ; but commonly these Persons being full of them-
 * selves, hearken too much to themselves, to hear GOD ; they rea-
 * son upon every Thing, and do all by Rules and Principles of hu-
 * man Wisdom and Prudence ; which would be much better done
 * thro' Simplicity, and a Docility to the Teaching of GOD's Spirit :
 * Such as these appear to have more Goodness than others ; and they
 * have, in a good Degree ; but then it is a mixed Goodness ; they
 * are great and big in themselves, and value themselves in Propor-
 * tion to their Capacity and Reason ; they are always sway'd by
 * their own Counsel, and strong in their own Eyes, and Opinion. O
 * my GOD, I thank thee with JESUS CHRIST, that thou hidest these
 * Secrets from the Wise and Prudent in their own Eyes, but revealest
 * them with Pleasure to weak and humble Souls ! 'Tis only Children
 * thou art familiar with ; Children in Malice, and every other Vice ;
 * but behavest towards others in their own Way : They will have
 * Knowledge, and other splendid Virtues ; thou givest them shining
 * Parts, and makest them a sort of Heroes ; but this is not the best

* Por-

• Portion ; there is something more hidden for thy dear Children ;
 • they lean, as *John* the beloved Disciple did, upon thy Bosom.

If these Arguments, drawn from a sensible Experience and Feeling of God's Operation in the Soul, convince not the Reader ; if he be not one of those who think to have eternal Life by the Scriptures, yet will not come to CHRIST, that they may have Life ; he would do well to examine and see, if he is not in the State the Author himself once was in ; seeking for GOD without, and never think to find him within.——‘ I tried, says he, by collecting in my Mind all the
 • wonderful Works of Nature, to frame an Idea of thy Grandeur ;
 • I sought thee among thy Creatures, and did not think of finding
 • thee in my own Heart---where thou art never absent. Consider
 • these Things, my Soul, and shut the Door of thy sensual Desires,
 • that thou mayst hear what GOD the LORD speaks ; and with the
 • Prophet *Samuel* say, *Speak LORD, for thy Servant heareth*. Let not
 • *Moses*, nor any of the Prophets, speak ; but do thou rather speak,
 • O LORD GOD, the Inspirer and Enlightener of all the Prophets !
 • for thou alone, without them, canst perfectly instruct me ; but
 • they without thee, can profit nothing. They sound forth Words,
 • but cannot give Spirit ; they speak well, but if thou be silent, they
 • inflame not the Heart ; they teach the Letter, but thou openest
 • the Sense ; they bring forth Mysteries, but thou unlockest the Mean-
 • ing of them ; they declare thy Commandments, thou helpest us
 • to fulfil them ; they shew the Way, thou givest Strength to walk
 • in it ; they act outwardly upon us, but thou enlightens and in-
 • structs the Heart ; they water, but thou givest the Increase ; they
 • strike the Ear with Words, thou givest Understanding to the
 • Heart.’

Thus, my dear Fellow-mortals, I would hope by this Time you are all sensible that you have a Portion of Grace or Light, which has manifested Sin and Folly to you sometimes in the Cool of the Day, when you have been a little sequester'd from your Diversions ; listen then, I beseech you, to its Voice ; it will speak, as I said before, as never Man did ; it will tell you all you have done, and continue to reprove when you do amiss. This is the Voice of that Prophet which *Moses* told the Children of *Israel* would be raised up amongst them : *A Prophet shall the LORD your GOD raise up unto you, of your Brethren, like unto me, him shall you hear in all Things. And whosoever will not hear this Prophe', he shall be cut off from among the People*, Acts iii. 22..

Hearken, I beseech you, to his Voice ; receive him in his spiritual Appearance ; kiss the Son while he offers his Grace, lest he be angry, and cut you off in the great Sin of Unbelief, in his Power to cleanse you from all Unrighteousness.

I don't purpose to particularize or consider singly every Sin the corrupt Nature of Man is liable to ; yet as there have several Iniquities occurred to me which I have noticed ; so I shall, as it now presents to my Understanding, make a brief Observation on that black and cruel One, of Detraction, especially as I have often observed

observed how many fall into this Mischief inconsiderately, without thinking it of so cruel and evil a Nature as it really is; this noxious Weed being the Product of most Countries, I can't forbear putting you in Remembrance how many able Pens have been employed, to eradicate it, by Reasons and Arguments, sufficient abundantly to convince us of its hurtful Nature, and give us a just Abhorrence of it; as an Injury done to our Neighbour seldom fails to recoil upon our selves at one Time or other; for he that diggeth a Pit shall fall into it, and he that rolleth a Stone, it shall return upon him. And as I have noted, this Vice has been exposed to the World long ago, in its hideous Forms and cruel Consequences, I don't here presume to think myself capable of painting it in more gloomy and disagreeable Shapes than others have done.

What I would remark is, That it is to be feared many don't peruse carefully the Scriptures, and other Books, on the Subject of Moral, as well as Christian Virtues; or at least do not sufficiently consider them; for did we but rightly and justly reflect on this Precept of CHRIST's; *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*, One would think it might be sufficient to prevent the Mouth of Envy, Malice, Infamy and Detraction, from ever being open'd; and were there but Room for this Reflection in any Interval of such Conversation, how wou'd it silence all Uncharitableness! CHRIST mentions our *Love to God* in the first Place, and in the superlative Degree; and in the next, *Love* (or Charity) *to our Neighbour, as the two* (most material) *Commandments* (or Points) *on which depends the Law and the Prophets*. And he has left us this Injunction, which is stiled *the golden Rule*, and ought to be an inviolable One, "Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do you even the same to them." And on another Occasion adds he, "A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."

And the Apostle *Paul* recommends to the *Romans* the accomplishing this Commandment in these Words "Owe no Man any Thing, but to love one another; Love worketh no Ill to his Neighbour; therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law." And after enumerating the Laws of the second Table, he subjoins, "If there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself." But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

The Apostle *James* tells the Believers, if they fulfill'd the royal Law according to the Scripture, "Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself, ye do well.

And the Apostle *Paul*, giving the *Romans* and *Galatians* a Catalogue of the Fruits or Sins of the Flesh, among others he mentions "Backbiting, Envy, Whispering, Malice, Emulation, &c." And he exhorts the *Ephesians* to put away "all Bitterness, Wrath, Clamour and Evil-speaking, with all Malice; and be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as GOD for CHRIST's Sake hath forgiven you."

And the Apostle *Peter*, dehorting Christians from the Breach of Charity, speaks after this Manner ; " Wherefore laying aside all Malice, Guile, Hypocrisy, Envy, and all Evil-speaking, by which you will become as new-born Babes (innocent and pure) fitted to receive (or desire) the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby."

And next let us observe, how that St. *Paul* exalts this Love to God, and Charity (or Love) to our Neighbour, above all other Gifts and Virtues : " Tho' I speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal. Tho' I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries and Knowledge ; tho' I have Faith, so as to remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing. And tho' I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and tho' I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity (if I don't give and suffer from this Principle of Love to God and my Neighbour) it profiteth me nothing. Charity or Love suffereth long, and is kind ; Charity envieth not (the Happiness of another) Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own (Honour or Reputation) is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil, rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth, or (when any act agreeable to the Gospel of CHRIST) beareth all Things, believeth all Things, (all the Good it hears, or can have any charitable Grounds to think of others) hopeth all Things (that if our Neighbour is bad he may mend) endureth all Things (patiently) as all Things work together for Good to them that love God. This Charity never faileth ; but whether there be Prophecies they shall fail ; whether there be Tongues they shall cease ; whether there be Knowledge it shall vanish away. And now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity, but the greatest of these are Charity," as it will continue when Faith shall end in Vision, and Hope in Enjoyment.

And now permit me to recommend to you a serious Perusal of these, as well as other Passages of the Holy Records, which were written for our Learning and Instruction : And amongst many which I might mention, who has wrote against the Sin of Detraction, there is one in the Collection called *The Lady's Library*, worth perusing, as the Arguments seem founded on Christian Principles and Doctrines, and the Reasoning obvious and convincing. But suffer me now, without Offence, to mention a Thought I have often had, when I have been reflecting on this Fault in both Sexes. As I endeavour to cherish a more charitable Opinion of Mankind, than to think any Person can delight in Evil simply as Evil ; so I would fain hope few are of so cruel Disposition, as to receive a Pleasure in hearing the Errors and Miscarriages of their Neighbours related. And if any be guilty of the same Fault, or any other, our Brother may be charged with, the Company of others in Evil, will by no Means extenuate our Crime, or render such less culpable in the Sight of God, or less odious to good Men : But, on the contrary (if I may be allowed the Expression) the Confederacy against Heaven is the more strengthened

ened by the Number of its Enemies, yet tho' they join Hand in Hand, they shall not go unpunished: However, I have put the Conduct of People of this Character on a more charitable and favourable Bottom; for I have consider'd, that these Sorts of Coverations, or rather Conspiracies, against our Neighbour's Fame, proceed from a Defect of that solid Nourishment the Author I have before cited seems to recommend, and I have sometimes thought, that it is our Ignorance of other Matters, and better Subjects, which occasions our Neighbour's Conduct to be so frequently the Topick of our Conversations; but I wou'd not be understood to call in Question the Capacities of either Sex, and wou'd only desire the Liberty of giving a Caution against the Misapplication of your Talent or Talents.

This appears to me to be the Fault, People's employing their Faculties so much, not only on vain, and trifling Subjects, but frequently on pernicious and hurtful Things, so that they have no Room nor Leisure to attend to more useful and important Subjects; and as I have said, that tho' we may not be chargeable with the same Fault our Neighbour may be guilty of, yet the Apostle *Paul* tells us, "All Mankind have sinned, and fallen short of the Favour of God;" and therefore all who have not yet sincerely repented and amended their Ways, have need of Repentance and Forgiveness. But if any commit an Evil, how are Christians to act in such a Circumstance? Are we to expose, blacken and defame our Brother, or to rejoice in his Miscarriage? No surely; the Gospel of *CHRIST* and his Ministers teach other Things.

"Brethren, if any be overtaken with a Fault, you that are spiritual (endeavour to) restore him;" How? In the Spirit of Meekness, considering, least thou thyself be also tempted," let his Miscarriage excite our Compassion towards him, and Caution towards ourselves; and bear ye one another's Burthens, and so fulfil the Law of *CHRIST*, "Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself;" and whenever we call in Question our Neighbour's Conduct, let us remember we are first to be spiritual ourselves, walking in all God's Commandments blameless: And agreeable to the Doctrines and Principles of *CHRIST*, let us first pull the Beam out of our own Eye, and then shall we see clearly to take the Mote from our Brother's. And when we are converted then shall we be fitted to strengthen our Brethren: Thus the royal Psalmist petitions the Almighty, "Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me: Then will I teach Transgressors thy Ways, and Sinners shall be converted to Thee."

I shall now mention another particular Evil, not only as I find it greatly blam'd by others, but as it has often been Subject of Concern to me when I have observ'd this unnatural Conduct, which relates only to the Female Part of the World, so justly chargeable on them: But which I would charitably hope they have not yet many of them seen, or at least reflected on the great Mischief it produces, both to themselves, and their Offspring. The Fault I mean, is Neglect of Duty, and natural Obligation to our helpless Infants, which is so obvious at their first Appearance in Life, when we deny them

that Nourishment Nature has provided for them, and by framing some insignificant Excuse, forsake and leave them to others.

This inhuman Treatment of our tender little Ones, I can't help thinking has its Foundation in Pride. Natural Affection to our Offspring seems blendid with our very Constitution; and it appears to me we must use uncommon Violence to separate it from our Make. But behold the Effects of Pride! what Mischief is there that it is not productive of! Even a few Weeks after our tender Babe beholds the Light, lest it should occasion us some extraordinary Trouble and Care, or prevent some little Delicacy in our Shape or Dress, or detain us from making unedifying and impertinent Visits, &c., we consign the poor Innocent into the Hands of a Stranger, to be foster'd by Women, oftentimes, of savage Tempers, and vile Affections, which, some are of Opinion, the Infant imbibes with its Milk; tho' I can't conceive this, as I apprehend we are not Sinners by Constitution, but Corruption. However, it is manifest, and often happens, that the Child imbibes an unwholesome Constitution from its Nurse: And, 'tis the Opinion of some, that the Death of many an Infant (in other Places at least) may be chargeable on their Parents, on this Score; as also when the Nurse proves careless and negligent in her Office; and that this has been frequently the Case, few will deny: For how can we reasonably expect that a Stranger shou'd take that due and tender Care, and faithfully discharge so troublesome an Office, which a Parent, suppos'd to have a natural Engagement for her Infant, declines and refuses, for this very Reason to take upon her. I, who am a Parent, have been fill'd with Astonishment at the Parent, and Compassion towards a Child, when I have beheld the delicate Mother sit unconcern'd and unrelenting, at the Time her little Offspring has been uttering its tender Complaints, and, as it were, petitioning the obdurate Parent with its little Eloquence of Tears for its own Support, provided by Nature, without her Care or Trouble.

Dr. *Whitby*, in some Observations on Things natural, to explain and illustrate his Subject, has these Words; 'Tis natural, *says he*, 'for a Woman to suckle her Infant, because Nature has furnish'd her with proper and suitable Means of Nourishment for that Purpose.' But had that Author lived till this Day, he had possibly been told Nature had changed her Order, and generally withheld and denied the common Means. It has often been Subject of Reflection to me, when I have observed that Women pretend they are so universally disabled, that they are incapable of taking upon them this tender Office, and discharging the natural Obligation of Suckling their Children. The general Plea is, want of Milk, or Tenderness of Constitution, which renders them unfit to take upon them so troublesome an Office: But as often as I have observed, examin'd, and traced such Pretences and Excuses for this Cruelty, I have found (except in some few Instances) they absolutely center in Pride and Self-love.

But I only propose by this short Remark, to remind some, and inform others, that this unnatural Conduct has been justly condemn'd

demn'd by Archbishop Tillotson, to whose Discourses, on the Education of Children, I would refer you. However, he (as well as others) does not propose Impossibilities to any; on the contrary, he goes far in admitting real and reasonable Pleas and Excuses; but where none of these appear, he is of Opinion, 'tis every Woman's indispensable Obligation to nourish her Infant at her own Breast. His Arguments are brought from Nature, Scripture and Reason; and I heartily wish every Parent, in this Circumstance, and of this Character, may peruse them impartially and candidly; and that they may have the good Effect of restoring that natural Affection and Tenderness, in the Female Part of the World, which has been so long lost.

And before I conclude this Observation, I shall Transcribe a Passage from a Pamphlet lately printed in London, entitled *Britain's Remembrancer*; wherein the Author (whom I have heard is a Nobleman) proposes a Method for improving the present unhappy Situation of the Nation and Kingdom of *Great-Britain*; and shews that the Calamities they are involved in, are the Effects of the Vices and Irreligion which prevail among the Inhabitants; against whom he brings a general Charge: And then in a particular Address to the Women, he takes the Liberty of telling them, That no small Share of the national Guilt is chargeable on their Account, as says he,

You have given up yourselves to Pleasures, Theatrical and Muscal Entertainments, to the Neglect not only of all that is spiritual and sacred, but also of those Domestick Cares which are your proper Province. The unavoidable Effect of a constant Pursuit of these publick Diversions, must be intirely to pervert your Minds from what is the only natural Sphere of Womankind, and what they were originally intended for, by the Ordination of Heaven; who form'd you for the plain and homely, but, necessary and endearing Characters, of a Wife and a Mother; and that all the various Ornaments of Pride, which fill a Woman's fantastick Brain, and disfigure the native Beauties of her Person; and all the giddy Hours she passes in a Round of guilty Follies, falsely called Pleasure and Diversion, tend to make her more unfit for what Nature design'd her. And whenever you aim at any thing else, than to be dutiful Daughters, loving Wives, tender Mothers, prudent Mistresses of Families, faithful Friends, and pious Christians, you aim at something quite out of Nature, and beside the Intention of Heaven in making you rational Creatures. Will Vauxhall improve you in Oeconomy and Frugality? Or Ranelagh in the domestick Arts that make Families happy? Will the bombastick Rant of the Play-house furnish you with Maxims of Prudence? Or its obscene Ribaldry store your Minds with the Graces of Modesty and Virtue? How long must you die away to the soft Strains of Music, or study theatrical Excellencies of Stage-heroes, before you will be the fitter Companions for Men of Sense? How long must you practice curling the Hair, fluttering your Fans, and overloading your Persons with false Ornaments, before your Conversation will be ever new, and ever entertaining to a Husband of Knowledge and Worth. This, and much more to the same Effect, says that noble Author, to whom I refer you; and shall

shall only add what he proposes in general as the best Expedient to improve the present Juncture of Affairs, *viz.* "That every Individual endeavour to reform One."

I have sometimes had a Concern on my Mind to recommend to your Consideration, the Justice and Duty you owe to your Children in another Respect beside that I have mentioned, *viz.* The Obligation every Parent is under to manifest an especial Regard for their future Happiness of the Souls of their Children, by a religious Care in their Education: But I have been discouraged from offering my Sentiments on this Subject, when I consider the little Care and Regard too many Parents have for their own Souls, whose future Well-being appears to be much disregarded by many, though professing Christianity.

I don't purpose to say much on this Subject; yet think proper to offer a few Things to your Consideration, which tho' they may perhaps appear trifling to some at first Sight, yet I have sometimes thought them of greater Consequence, than I apprehend many others do. That Errors in the first Principles of Education (as well as in other Cases) are dangerous and pernicious, is a received Maxim; for if we set out with wrong Means to obtain a desired End, we have not only lost our own Time, but with great Difficulty and Labour must unlearn our first Rules and Lessons.

Upon reflecting on the Appearances of Anger and Resentment, which we find so early and so often glow in the little tender Breasts of Infants, and the early Propensities we observe in them to Pride and a Fondness for Trifles; it has appeared to me, they may be often attributed to the ill Example of Parents, &c. and Errors in their Management from their Infancy, as young Children we know commonly imitate and act from the Example of their Parents, or those concern'd in the Care and Education of them.

To say little of the superfluous Ornaments of Lace, Lace-work, and Ribbands, which the Infant is adorn'd with, as soon as it comes into the World, as well to please and gratify the Mother's and Nurse's Vanity, as that it may be admir'd by the formal and ceremonious Visitors; as soon as the Infant is capable of the least Notice, it is immediately presented with a Number of foolish Toys, which, tho' some, suitably chosen, may be proper to give them an Idea of natural Things, yet I have thought there are many Trifles presented and recommended to them as Things of Value and Worth, which lead them afterwards to entertain a Fondness for Vanities and Toys, that are more expensive and hurtful.

By this Time, some little Dawning of Reason begins to appear in the Child, Care is taken to inculcate the Principles of Anger and Malice, Resentment and Revenge, as the Child is instructed to receive every little Contradiction, as an Injury or Affront, which he is to revenge, by giving the Nurse the Blow to execute on the Offender.

Next comes in Course, to amuse the Child, a String of idle absurd Sonnets and Ballads, which, as soon as its lisping Tongue is able to form Words, is taught to repeat.

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The next Instruction is, in a Catalogue of vain, amusing Stories, a Relation of Fairy Tales, Histories of Giants, Tom Thumbs, and such like Stuff, are the young and tender Brains and Capacities of Infants styr'd with ; as proper Rudiments to fit them for, and introduce more ingenious Lies and Romances.

The next Thing Children are early instructed in, is Rule and Authority, by teaching, and allowing them a Superiority over Servants.

A Servant tho' never so judicious and capable of knowing what is fit and convenient for a Child, is nevertheless restrained by many Parents from keeping Children in Subjection and Order, or crossing and disappointing their Will in any Circumstance ; this manifestly teaches the Child a Lesson of Self-will, which many never unlearn all their Lives after.

The next Cruelty we are guilty of to our Children, is Flattery (at the same Time by Example or Precept teaching them many little and mean Artifices and equivocal Turns, unworthy a rational and generous, to say nothing of a Christian Mind) this is commonly practised both by Parents and Servants, by whom Children are instructed, when adorn'd with all the Pomp and Vanity within the Parent's Reach, to set an high Value and Estimation on themselves, on the Score of their fine Clothes, &c. or the Perfections of their Bodies, and at the same time they are taught to despise others, by persuading them they are both finer and handsomer than some others.

And now to finish and compleat a modern Education, it requires the following Accomplishments, *viz.* To be expert in Dress and Dancing, Ombre or Gaming in general, to be able to make judicious Remarks on Opera Airs, and Stage Plays, and to repeat much of the Ribaldry and Prophanity they learn from thence, and reading Romances and other pernicious Books.

Add to all this, the Art of Visiting, where after those present are much flatter'd and complimented ; the Absent, on the contrary, are as ungenerously dealt with, and severely handled.

But with respect to the religious Education of Children, we do not find many Parents employ much of their Time in giving Children an Idea of the Supreme Being, suitable to their Understanding ; and as far as their little Capacities will admit, instruct and inculcate the Principles of moral and Christian Duties : On the contrary, the Generality of Parents, seem to think they have sufficiently discharged their religious Duty, if they are careful their Children are taught to repeat the Duties the Catechism contains ; and in the same Manner say over a Set of Words, entitled, *Prayers for Children* ; which they neither do nor can understand, at the Age they are taught them ; and which I can't but consider as great Impiety and Irreverence in both Parents and School-mistresses, when they teach Children to speak Words, they do not understand, to an Infinite Being ; of which they, at the Time they are taught them, can have no competent Knowledge, so as to enable them to address Him at all ; much less in the Terms commonly put into their Mouths.

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The Time I am confin'd to, would fail to enumerate every Instance the Generality of Parents are culpable in; with Respect to Injuries they inadvertently and inconsiderately do their Children, in their Infancy, &c. but I can't without a seeming Absurdity, put them in Mind of the Justice they owe their Children, when, with Concern, I observe so many fail in the Justice they owe themselves, by the apparent Neglect of their own Souls. I desire them to permit me to recommend to each of their serious Considerations, the inestimable Worth and Value of your own immortal Souls, as well as those of your Children: *For what is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall he give in Exchange for his Soul? No Man can give to God a Ransom for it, seeing the Redemption is so precious, that it ceaseth for ever,* (Psal. xlix. 7.) when once it is lost.

'Twould be an inexpressible Happiness, were every one sensible of this Truth; there would be then Hope that they would enter upon the great and necessary Work our LORD recommends; that is, "First that our own Tree be made good, and then the Fruit, it will necessarily produce, will be good also:" And when we find a Necessity of doing Justice to ourselves, in the great Duty and Care of our Souls, we shall, I am certain, feel a very strong and sensible Concern for the real Happiness of our Offspring. Whether the Education, I have been above describing, is agreeable to Christianity, I leave all Parents, in their serious Moments, to consider; and proceed with a Remark on the Time called *Christmas*; which being so lately observed here, occasioned me to pursue a Reflection I have heretofore had at such Seasons. I shall first mention an Observation of *Alexander Cruden*, a Clergyman (if I mistake not) After he has given us a Catalogue of the Festivals observed by the *Jews*, he adds; *In the Christian Church, we have no Festivals that appear to have been instituted by CHRIST or his Apostles: Nevertheless Christians have always celebrated the Memory of CHRIST's Resurrection, and kept this Feast on every First-day of the Week; which was called the Lord's-day, so early as in St. John's Time: I was (says John) in the Spirit on the Lord's-day.*

However, I intend not here to enquire how, or when, this, or any other Feast, came to be introduc'd among Professors of Christianity; but only briefly to say, Those who observe Days and Times, should, as they profess, observe them to the LORD.

You have a pretty large Account (in *Luke*) how the Birth of the holy Child was ushered in. *There were (says he) Shepherds abiding in the Fields of Judea, near unto the Town of Bethlehem; watching their Flocks by Night. And lo the Angel of God came upon them, and the Glory of the LORD shone round them; and they were sore afraid: And the Angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold I bring you glad Tidings of great Joy which shall be to all People: For unto you this Day is born, in the City of David, a Saviour, which is called CHRIST the LORD. And suddenly there was with the Angel a Multitude of Heavenly Hosts, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest! on Earth Peace,*

Peace, Good-will to Men! Then said the Shepherds, let us now go to Bethlehem, and see the Thing which is now come to pass, and which the LORD hath made known unto us; and when they had seen the Child, they made known the Saying abroad, and they that heard, wondered at the Things that were told them by the Shepherds; who returned glorifying and praising GOD, for all the Things they had heard and seen, as it was told them by the Angel: And when eight Days were accomplished for the circumcising the Child, they called his Name JESUS (a Saviour) which was so named of the Angel before he was conceived in the Womb; for this Reason, because he shall save his People from their Sins. Here are Glad-tidings of great Joy to all People, express'd with the greatest Solemnity: For behold suddenly a great Multitude of heavenly Hosts appear'd with the Angel, praising GOD for his Good-will to Men; by introducing the Means of Peace on Earth, as GOD is, in CHRIST, reconciling the World unto Himself; and blotting out the Hand-writing that was against them, nailing it to the Cross; and putting Mankind into a Capacity of Salvation.

And next good old Simeon, who it appears, had been waiting for the Consolation of Israel, celebrated the Birth of CHRIST on this wise, LORD now lettest Thou thy Servant depart in Peace, for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the Face of all People: A Light to enlighten the Gentiles; and to be the Glory of thy People Israel!

Then Anna the Prophetess, coming into the Temple, gave Thanks likewise unto the LORD, and spake of CHRIST to all them that looked for Redemption in Israel.

And next we may observe how the wise Gentiles behaved on this Occasion, when they came from the East to Jerusalem, twelve Days after the Birth of our LORD: These Men tho' they were Heathens, and considered Him as a temporal King (as well as a spiritual Saviour) yet approach Him with no loud and clamorous Acclamations of noisy and frantic Joy; no Drums, Trumpets, nor Fiddles; but when they came into the House and saw him, prostrating themselves, they worshipped him.

And now I wou'd beg leave to ask the Professors of Christianity, if they, on these Occasions, act consistently with themselves, who tell us their Times call'd Holy-days are more especially set apart for pious Purposes; Are they then agreeable to this Design employ'd in an Enquiry, whether you have any rational Ground to hope you have an Interest in the Saviour, whose Birth you profess to commemorate? Do you examine whether your Practice keeps Pace with your Profession? Do you live a Life of Humility and Holiness, agreeable to the Example our holy Pattern recommends to our Imitation; who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from Sin, and Sinners? Or, on the contrary, are not these Times consider'd, by most People, no otherwise than Seasons of Mirth and Jollity? And, as such, are they not chiefly spent, by Professors themselves, in Feasting, and Dancing, Gaming, Jestings and Wantonness; not considering the Work our LORD came to accomplish, neither do they re-

gard the Hand of Power that would save them ! And among the inferior Class of People, what but one continued Scene of Drunkenness, Riot, Debauchery and Madness, appears to every common Observer ! 'Twould be much more beneficial, *That the Husbandman should till his Grounds, and the Artist following or working at his Trade, than that they should be thus idle, or, what is worse, doing wickedly on these Occasions, when, by Reason of wicked Works they crucify afresh the Lord of Life and Glory, and put him to open Shame !*

I would once more ask both Professors and Profane, whether Men, &c. in these Circumstances, can possibly have any just Title to the sacred Name of Christianity, while they act in direct Opposition to the Nature of it ? and whether this, and such like Conversations, becomes the Gospel of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST ? Examine I beseech you, these Things seriously, and solidly ; and I dare venture to say, you will find, with me (who was once in the Observation of Times, &c.) that all such Rejoycing is Evil ; And that the appointed Fasts and Feasts, in the Manner you observe them, are an Abomination to the LORD, yea, his Soul loaths them !

I have before told you, that it was not my Intention to examine and consider every particular Transgression the Controversy of God is against, yet I shall briefly mention the Catalogue of Sins the Apostle Paul gives us, and which he says are the Fruits of the Flesh, and while People continue to produce such Fruit, they cannot possibly have an Entrance administer'd to them into the Kingdom of God.

" Now, (says he) the Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are
 " These, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleaness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife,
 " Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings,
 " and such like." And in 1 Cor. vi. 10, he adds, " Theft, Covetousness, Revileings, Extortion, &c. of which (says he) I have
 " told you in Time past, that they which do such Things, shall not
 " inherit the Kingdom of God." And in the first of Romans, he describes such as did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, by these Marks or Characters, " That they were filled with all Unrighteousness, as Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, Maliciousness,
 " Full of Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity ; that they
 " were Whisperers, Backbiters, Haters of God, Despitiful, proud
 " Boasters, Inventors of evil Things, Disobedient to Parents, without Understanding, Covenant Breakers, without natural Affection,
 " implacable and unmerciful." And to make the Contrast or Opposition of such Things to the Spirit of Christianity the more apparent and obvious, he immediately opposes the Works or Fruits, which the Spirit of CHRIST produces in his People, who follow its Leadings and Directions : " But the Fruit of the Spirit, is Love, Joy,
 " Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness,
 " Temperance, Galatians v. 22. And the Wisdom which is from
 " above, (or from God) is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy
 " to be entreated, full of Mercy, and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy, James iii. 17." After the Apostle
 had

had been enumerating the Sins of the Gentiles, &c. which had been prevalent among them before their Conversion to the Christian Faith; *Such (says he) in time past were some of you; and he tells the Ephesians, you hath CHRIST quicken'd, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins; wherein, in Time past, ye walked, according to the Course (or Customs) of this World, according to the Power of the Prince of the Air; the Spirit that worketh now in (the Hearts of) the Children of Disobedience, among whom also we had our Conversation in the Lusts of our Flesh; fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh, and of the Mind: But GOD who is rich in Mercy, even when we were dead in Sin, &c. hath quicken'd us together in CHRIST JESUS, and made us sit together in heavenly Places.*

And now it seems fit we should examine how this great and glorious Work was brought about and affected, *viz. by a Resurrection from the Death of Sin to a Life of Righteousness; which this same Apostle tells us, was (and is) done by the washing of Regeneration and renewing (Power) of the Holy Ghost (in the Heart;) But now are ye washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord JESUS, and by the Spirit of our GOD.*

Hence we may observe, that these Believers, who were in Time past Sinners, are now, by the sanctifying Power of CHRIST, and Obedience to the Faith deliver'd, become Saints; agreeable to what the Apostle Paul writes to the Christian Churches, *Your Bodies (says he) are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, 1 Cor. vi. 19. The Ephesians were Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and Household of GOD. The Conversation of the Phillippians was in Heaven. The Collossians were delivered from the Power of Darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of the dear Son of GOD. The Hebrews were come to the City of the living GOD; to the heavenly Jerusalem: And the Apostle Peter tells the Churches, that they were a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People, 1 Pet. ii. 9.*

But is this the State of Christians in our Age? Can we say we are come to this heavenly Jerusalem, where the great GOD is worshipped in Spirit and in Truth? Or are we Strangers to those Things that they experienced; and yet persuade ourselves, that we are the People of GOD, and good Christians? The primitive Churches had the honourable Title of Saints; we can give ourselves no better Name than miserable Sinners. And what is the Reason, that we are so much outdone by the Churches aforementioned? we can't conclude, that the Kingdom of CHRIST, that then appear'd in Power, did, as the Sun in the Firmament sometimes doth, shew itself in a Morning, and be no more seen all the Day; for the Kingdom of CHRIST is an everlasting Kingdom, and his new Covenant an everlasting Covenant. Neither can we conclude, that GOD hath withdrawn Himself from the Children of Men; for he never forsakes us, unless we forsake him; as the Clouds hinder, that we cannot at all Times of the Day see the Brightness of the Sun, so Iniquity hinders, that we do not remain sensible of the Presence of GOD. The Apostle foresaw, that there would be a falling away from the Grace in which many of the primitive Christians were established; and it soon after his Decease came to pass.

But we say, that the dark Night of Apostacy is over, and we live in Gospel-days again; if so, where are the Fruits? We may, I confess, hear Gospel-Words; but where is the Gospel-Power, by which Believers come to be Sons of God; to bear his Image in Righteousness? Why are not we, call'd Christians, grown to the Stature of them that were the Children of Heathens?

The Reason to me is this, we have not built upon the same Foundation: Those built on the sure Rock, and living Foundation; on CHRIST; as he in all Ages, was, and still is, in a spiritual Appearance, the Light of the World, and the Life of Righteousness; and taking his Eternal Spirit in themselves for their Guide, turn'd from whatsoever they were reprov'd for. Thus their sinful Desires came to be mortified; and such as were carnal came to be spiritual; and this made them a peculiar People. Did we walk in their Footsteps, we might rise to their Attainments; but if we build on Words, and outward Services, without Spirit and Life, we can never rise. For as Paul said in another Case, *If I speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding Brass, &c.* So I say in this Case, if we hear Men and Angels; if we could live continually under the Sound of good Words, if we have no Regard to that inward Light, which discovers Evil, and gives Power to turn from it, we can never mortify Sin, cleanse our Souls, and become an holy People. The Work of Sanctification is inward in the Heart, and to be effected by inward Means: Nothing but inward Light can expell inward Darknes: Since Men fondly persuade themselves, that tho' they sow Tares, they shall reap Wheat; tho' they go down into the Grave Sinners, they shall rise Saints; and attain in another World, what primitive Christians attain'd in this: Their Conversation hath not been in Heaven; but in Earth: They have walked in Darknes, and not in the Light; the GOD of this World hath been served, and not the GOD of Heaven.

And notwithstanding this is the unhappy and deplorable Circumstance of many of the Professors of this Age; yet from the Mouths of such, how frequently do we hear Exclamations and Complaints, against the daily Growth of *Infidelity* and *Deism*! never so much as imagining that they are any way accessary or instrumental to this Mischief; yet one great Cause thereof, I take to be, the irregular and unholy Lives of Professors. And till such can be perswaded, that a consistent Practice with the Religion they profess, is absolutely requisite, to recommend the Christian Religion; and till they produce the most convincing and prevailing Argument, *Example*, how can they hope or expect to be credited by this Infidel Race, which so much abounds; as every one must be sensible of the Difficulty of enforcing a Precept (tho' never so laudable in itself) in Words, which in our Lives and Practice we notoriously deny? Therefore the only Expedient that I know of, to stop the Mouths of Unbelievers, will be, *To shew forth your good Conversation in CHRIST JESUS, coupled with the Fear of GOD; to let your Light so shine before Men, that they seeing*

seeing your good Works, may glorify God, and be excited to follow your good Example.

And now dear People, having, in a broken Manner, declared to you these Things which lay as a Weight on my Mind, there remains little but to propose to you, to try the Foundation of your Faith and Hope: Truth never loses by Examination, but shines with greater Light and Splendor: Therefore, agreeable to the Apostle's Advice, "Examine yourselves, whether you be of the (true) Faith; know you not yourselves, how that CHRIST JESUS is in you, except you be Reprobates?" "That is, (says Grotius) Christians in Name, and not in Deeds."

Do not trifle, I beseech you, in a Matter of such Importance, as the future Well-being of your immortal Souls! To be mistaken in this Point, will be of fatal Consequence; Errors of this Sort being only to be rectify'd while we remain in this Life; for we are positively told, *That there is no Wisdom, nor Knowledge, Work, nor Devotion, in the Grave, whither we are all hastening.* And our LORD tells us, He wrought while it was Day, and excites us so to do, by saying, *The Night cometh wherein no Man can Work.* Let us therefore enquire whether our Faith is such an One as operates by Love: *If ye love me, keep my Commandments,* says our blessed LORD. Let us remember what Obstacles this true Faith removed for the primitive Christians, what Difficulties it enabled them to surmount. *Heb. xi. Without this Faith (in the Power of CHRIST) it is impossible to please God. I will (says the Apostle James) shew thee my Faith by my Works; for as the Body, without the Spirit, is dead, so Faith without Works, is dead also.* "Ye are my Friends (says CHRIST) if ye do whatsoever I command."

What will it avail us, tho' his outward Gospel be taught in our Land, if we do not obey his Law written in our Hearts, and conform to its Rule and Government? And tho' CHRIST our LORD is the Fountain to cleanse us from the Pollution of Sin; yet if we refuse to be purified by his spiritual Baptism; "If he wash us not, we can have no Part in Him," nor his Merits. And indeed my Friends, I have taken some Pains, by divine Assistance, to examine and enquire how I might have a well grounded Hope to obtain Salvation, or, in other Words, eternal Life and Happiness. And in all my Enquiries and Researches, I have not been able to discover any other Way than this, which the Almighty continues to direct Mankind in at this Day, as well as heretofore, "The Way of Holiness thro' CHRIST," he being the Author of eternal Salvation to all Believers. "Be ye holy, as I the LORD your GOD am holy; and "without Holiness, no Man shall see the LORD:" And I find I can be made so no other Way, but thro' "Sanctification of the Spirit, unto the Obedience of Faith, and Sprinkling of the Blood of JESUS CHRIST." For every one who has, or can reasonably have any Foundation of Hope to be saved by CHRIST's Life, Sufferings, Resurrection, Ascension, and Mediation, must, by his Grace assisting, purify himself, as he is pure; as no unclean Thing can possibly enter
his

his holy Kingdom. And it is by his Grace we are saved, through Faith, operating by Love; "not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God!"

Thus, as I became obedient to the Teaching of this Grace received, I came to witness Mercy and Peace multiplied to me; for which, in great Reverence and Humility, I desire always to bless God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, for his unspeakable Gift! and for his abundant Mercy wherewith he hath visited my Soul in his Day-spring from his high and holy Presence; and afforded me a good Foundation to hope for his Salvation; and I desire to give all the Glory to God, and to say, "not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy great Name and Power, be the Glory!" *Be ye holy*, is a Precept which contains no Mystery; here is no *Enigma* to unriddle; no Need of Commentators; no Room for *Scepticism*, nor Controversy; but a plain and positive Command, so legible, that he that runs may read; the Wayfaring Man, tho' a Fool (with Respect to the Wisdom of the World) cannot err here. Therefore suffer me to counsel you, to break off the Sin that you find easily beset you, by Righteousness; and your Iniquities by Amendment of Life; that so your Tranquility may be lengthened, and attend you beyond the Grave.

And to you, as I have said before, who may not charge yourselves with gross Immoralities, yet who prefer a Portion in this Life, to the durable Riches and Righteousness in another; who say unto Gold, "Thou art my Hope, and make fine Gold your Confidence; who have forsaken God, the Fountain of living Waters, and hewn to yourselves, Cisterns, broken Cisterns, that will hold no Water; who have changed the Glory of the incorruptible Being, and given it to your corruptible Things: Remember, God will not give his Glory to Idols, nor his Praise to your graven Images: Therefore keep yourselves from Idols, and love not the World nor the Things of this World; for if any Man love the World (inordinately) the Love of the Father is not in him."

And to you who are Lovers of Pleasure, more than Lovers of God; who delight and place your Felicity in Grandeur, Pomp and Noise; consider, I beseech you, that all this will afford you no Comfort nor Satisfaction in a dying Moment; but, on the contrary, Remorse and Sorrow: They will each one abandon you in your greatest Extremities; and you will then see how you have been deluded and mistaken, when the undeniable Messenger of Death lays his Arrest upon you, and that important Hour assures you, that a few Moments will decide your Judgment, and cast you either for eternal Bliss, or Misery! Of what Esteem then will be all your Pleasures, and all your Toys? The greatest and most exalted of all human Glory, "even Crowns themselves will then be Toys." This then will be our Rejoicing, "The Testimony of a good Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not by fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in this World, 2 Cor. i. 12." And when we look back, and make our Appeal to God, as good King *Hezekiah* did on his Death bed; "Remember now, O LORD,

“ Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy Sight.” O happy State! O glorious Condition! May God of his infinite Mercy so incline your Hearts to keep his Commandments, that when the Time of your Dissolution approaches, you may all die the Death of the Righteous, and that your latter End may be like his! On the contrary, how will the Wicked look back with Horror and Affright on a Life spent in open Defiance and Violation of God’s Laws, or a total Neglect of and Indifference for them? What will appear in such a melancholy Season to such as these, a certain fearful looking-for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which will devour the Adversaries of the LORD, whose Wrath will then be revealed in a more extraordinary Manner against all Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of Men. This will be a Day of Trial (*viz.* the Day of Death) which will come on all the Inhabitants of the Earth: wherein the Faces of the Unrighteous will gather Paleness. A Day of Trouble and Distress! A Day of Darkness and Gloominess! A Day of Awakening and Alarm! wherein neither Silver nor Gold shall be able to deliver! Consider this in Time, all you that forget God, lest he laugh at your Calamities, and mock when your Fear cometh.

But some may object, this is not always the unhappy Case and Situation of Sinners, who defer the Work of Repentance to a sick or dying Bed; God is very merciful, and is he not always willing and ready to accept returning, repenting Sinners; though at the eleventh or last Hour?—I shall reply in the Words of an Author known to some of you at least: “ Death puts an End to our Day of Grace, and determines our final State; then all Men must confess of what mighty Consequence it is to die well; we can die but once, and if we miscarry that once, we are undone for ever!” And what considering Man would make such dangerous Experiments as Sinners do every Day, when their Souls are the Price of the Experiment? Who would try how long Death will delay its coming! how long he may Sin on, without thinking of Death and Judgment? Whether Death will give him timely Notice to repent? Or whether God will give him Grace to repent? And if he does, who won’d venture the Hazard of a Death-Bed Repentance? Whether after a long Life of Sin and Wickedness, a few distracted, confused and almost despairing Sighs and Groans will carry him to Heaven, and commute for what ought to have been the Work and Business of our whole Lives, *viz.* a Preparation for Death: If such could, after they have discover’d their Mistake and Folly, return and live over their Lives again, the Hazard were not so great; but this is an Experiment not to be twice made. If they Sin on till they harden themselves in Sin, and are forsaken of the Grace of God; if Death come long before they expected it, and cut them off by Surprise, and without Warning; if their dying and despairing Agonies and Horrors, should not prove a godly Sorrow, nor that Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of, they are lost to Eternity! And what Man in his Senses wou’d expose

expose his Soul to such a Hazard as this? Who wou'd not take Care to make his Calling and Election sure before Death comes, and in a Matter of such great Concernment (wherein one Miscarriage is irreparable) to prevent Danger at a Distance?

Some Men talk of Death, as if it were a Thing that could be done in two or three Days, and that the proper Time of doing it was a little before they die. But I know of no other Preparation for Death, but living well, which is the only sure Evidence for Heaven. Men may cheat themselves with vain Hopes and Imaginations when they come to die; but nothing will be a solid Foundation for Peace, but an universal Righteousness.

Therefore I entreat you, the Inhabitants of this Place, to disabuse yourselves; don't sell your Birthright on such disadvantageous Terms, nor barter eternal Felicity for momentary Pleasure; give not Sleep to your Eyes, nor Slumber to your Eye-lids, till you are become fit Temples for the mighty God of *Jacob* to dwell in! Bring Presents to God (who ought to be fear'd) even the Presents of humble and penitent Hearts; the Lord calls for your Hearts, not for your Lip-Service; *My Son, give me thy Heart; Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates: even lift up the everlasting Doors of your Hearts, and the King of Glory will come in, and dwell with you, and you with Him.*

And now suffer me to remind you, that you no longer despise the Riches of God's Goodness and Mercy, since his Long-suffering and Forbearance is design'd to lead to Repentance. By the Mercies of God I beseech you, that you present yourselves a living Sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is but your reasonable Service. And be not conformable to this evil World, but be transform'd, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect Will of God concerning you; which is no less than your Sanctification. And now I think fit to observe to you, that while almost all *Europe*, and even the Dominions of the King to whom you are Subject, are unhappily engaged and involved in the miserable and deplorable Consequences of a cruel and bloody War, you have enjoyed unmolested Tranquility; your Rights at home have not yet been invaded by your Enemies; indeed your Properties at Sea have sometimes been wrested from you by unreasonable Men; but what is that Evil compared with the Calamities and Distresses Thousands in *Great-Britain* and elsewhere have felt and suffered? Fire, Sword, Rapine and Plunder, desolate Widows, and distressed and fatherless Children, have been the dismal Effects of these unhappy Disputes and Differences between the Powers of *Europe*.
 "And cannot we yet discover a Providence in all this Destruction,
 "which is suffered to prevail among Men? Are we not yet convinced
 "that there is a God of Justice that rules in the Kingdoms of the
 "Earth, and that he is about to take Vengeance on the Nations
 "and Families that call not upon his Name in Truth and Righteousness."

What greater Inducement can I propose to you to turn and love God, than his manifold Mercies? Do not you think they call for your Gratitude? He allures you by his Favours; he gives you Corn,
 Wine,

Wine, and Oil; he gives you Vine-yards and Olive yards, or at least the Means of procuring them; he draws with the Cords and Bands of his Love; he would take you by the Hand, and would heal you; he would take the Yoke of hard Servitude from off your Necks; and, if you are but willing to part with your Idols, he is ready to take the very Names of them out of your Mouths, and to betroth you to himself in Righteousness, Loving-kindness and Mercy. Tho' the whole Head be sick, and the whole Heart faint; tho' your Soul's Enemy may have wounded and left you half dead; yet there is Balm in *Gilead*; there is a Physician there, who offers you his Aid, and is willing to recover you from your moral and spiritual Disorders. And tho' you may be never so great Prodigals, if you have not sinned out the Day of his Grace, Resolve upon returning, and the heavenly Father is ready, on your unfeigned Repentance, to receive you into the Arms of his Mercy, and to put on you the best Robe you ever wore, even that of his own Righteousness.

Thus having briefly observed how greatly we are indebted to the Almighty, for his manifold Mercies; I would wish you to examine what Returns of Love and Gratitude you have made; for Remember, tho' God bears long, yet he will not always bear; but expects that we should not only praise Him with our Lips, but with our Lives also: Turn then, I beseech you, to God, while he visits you in Mercy; for unto his Power shall every Tongue confess, and every Knee bow, either in Mercy or in Judgment.

I have sometimes thought it would be of singular Advantage to Professors of Christianity of all Denominations, seriously to examine and enquire of your own Hearts, what our Religion has done for us; or what Benefits have accrued to us from it? Whether the Grace we have received has assisted us to resist the Temptations of our Soul's Adversary; and whether we are nearer Salvation than when we first believed? For a being invested with a Power to do a Thing, will no longer be of Use to us than as we apply it. The Grace and good Spirit, tho' it instruct us to deny all Ungodliness, is of no further Benefit to us, but as we obey its Teachings, and follow its Leadings; therefore I am of Opinion it would not hurt the best Christians, nor any others, sometimes to ask themselves the following Questions.

Have I witness'd the strong Man arm'd cast out of my Heart, and his Goods spoil'd, and a stronger than he in Possession? Have I, who assume the Name of a Christian, departed from all Iniquity? Are all old Things done away (*for he that is in CHRIST is a new Creature*) and do I experience new Thoughts, new Desires, new Conversation, a total Change, all Things become regular, uniform and consistent with my high and holy Calling? Is CHRIST the best beloved of my Soul? Does my Heart pant and mine Eyes fail for his Salvation? Is my Soul athirst for God; Do I long for his Presence more than for hidden Treasure? Do I love God above all other Considerations, and my Neighbour as myself? Am I careful lest I offend him? Do I

live in constant Observance of his Laws? Do I live in his Fear? Am I circumspect in all my Words, that I sin not with my Tongue? Does my Conversation become the Gospel of CHRIST? And am I careful to adorn his Doctrines, which I profess to believe and be guided by?

If upon a candid Examination, this be the happy State of Professors of Christianity, my Soul can rejoice with them, let them call themselves by what Denomination of Sect they may: For happy is the People who are in such a Case! yea, blessed are they whose Portion is the God of Jacob! On the contrary, if we are only professing and not in the Possession of Godliness; if we have a Form, but are insensible of the Power to work a Change in our Hearts, our Religion as yet, has done nothing for us; therefore I entreat all who are in this Case, to consider, 'tis an unfit State for Heaven; for if we have not witnessed a being created a new in CHRIST JESUS; born of the incorruptible Seed and Word of God; known a Death unto Sin, and a new Birth unto Righteousness; born again of the Spirit; our LORD positively says, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

Let the Time past then suffice; and for the future redouble your Diligence; and no longer hold the Truth in Unrighteousness; walk circumspectly as wise, redeeming the Time. The Kingdom of God does not stand in Form, but in Power; neither is Religion to be taken up by Fits and Starts, as it suits our Leisure and Convenience; nor by Imitation, but Conviction; we must cleave to God, with full purpose of Heart; what our Hand finds necessary to do in this great Business of Salvation, we must do it with all our Might; we must not indolently seek, but (by God's Assistance) ardently strive to enter the Kingdom of God. Our Talent must gain another Talent; lest as the unprofitable Servant was, we be deprived of that which we have received. False Pretences to Religion, and a bare Belief of the Truths of the Gospel, will be of no Advantage to us: Crying LORD, LORD, will not avail if we do not the Things which his Precepts enjoin: No Man can truly call CHRIST LORD, but such as witness his Rule and Dominion in their Hearts, bringing them into Subjection to his Power: Not the Hearers of the Law, but the Doers, shall be justified: Not he that hears CHRIST'S Sayings, but he that doth them, is accepted.

On a memorable Occasion the sacred History informs us, the Almighty heard the Voice of the Children of Israel's Words, when they spake to Moses; and he tells him that the People had well said all that they had spoken; but knowing the Insincerity and Inconstancy of their Hearts, he saith, "O! that there were such an Heart in them, that they would fear before me, and keep my Commandments always, that it may be well with them and their Children for ever!"

Religion is an Heart-Work, it must be begun, and carried on and completed there: Nothing but keeping God's Commandments will entitle us to his Favour: Nothing short of having discharged our Parts in the Christian Warfare, and obtained a Victory over Sin, will en-

title

title us to a Crown of Glory: Nothing less than being true and faithful Members of CHRIST'S Church Militant here on Earth, will ever admit us Members of his Church triumphant in the Heavens. 'Tis to those that overcome that our LORD will give to sit with him in his Throne; even as he overcame, and is sit down with his Father in his Throne.

A being convinc'd in our Judgments of God's Goodness, &c. and that his Laws are righteous altogether, and therefore we ought to obey them, is not Conversion. Faith is not Practice; therefore, *add to your Faith Virtue, to Virtue Knowledge, to Knowledge Temperance, to Temperance Patience, to Patience Godliness, to Godliness Brotherly Kindness, and to Brotherly Kindness Charity.*

Thus, my dear Friends and Neighbours, I have declar'd in great Truth and Sincerity, my earnest Concern and Desire for the real Happiness of the Inhabitants of my native Country in general; and having an especial and peculiar Regard for many that I have known for a Series of Years, when I have reflected on the bare Possibility of your missing Heaven and Happiness thro' Inadvertency, Inconsideration, and an inordinate Love for the Things of this Life, it has been Subject of Mourning to me; and especially, as I have through Mercy seen, that when I was in the like Situation, how dangerous a One it was, and that all who are in this unhappy Case, stand indeed in slippery Places. And many a Time has my Soul grieved secretly, when I have observed the Pursuits of such, how earnestly they are running after Vanities, and pursuing Lies (which will indeed deceive) and turning their Backs on God's Offers of Love, and refuse to let him put his Beauty on them, and to make them glorious within; and since I have witnessed the great Disproportion between the Love of God, and the Love of the World, I am the more earnestly concern'd to invite you to come taste and see of the Goodness of the LORD; O make but Trial of his Love, and you'll say the one half was not told you. Then will you find the most exalted Happiness this World can yeild, will be nothing but Vanity, yea, lighter than Vanity; and were you once in Possession of the Love of God, you'd be sensible that you inherited Substance, substantial Joys, unspeakable Delight, Satisfaction and Peace.

O! that this unutterable Love of God might be once impress'd and engraven on your Hearts; Then wou'd you confess with me, that one Day in his Courts, Presence and Favour, is better than a Thousand spent in the Enjoyment of earthly Delights and Pleasures.

But now I would stop a while, and ask, If you have not been cheated by delusive Hopes and Promises of obtaining Satisfaction from temporal Enjoyments? Have you never discover'd their Fallacy? Have they not vanished into Air, even when you fancy'd yourselves just in Possession? And don't you find they leave you dissatisfied and uneasy? I am certain this is the Case with many; you still feel a painful Vacancy, even in the midst of your sensual Delights and temporal Enjoyments; which, be assured (I speak by happy

tho' short Experience) nothing short of the Approbation and Favour of God, and a Possession of his Love and Peace, can ever possibly satisfy.

I have told you already, that I have felt great Trouble and Anxiety of Mind on your Account; but tho' my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears; and cou'd I, or any one else, weep continually Day and Night for you, that you may rest in the Day of Trouble; yet another's Concern cannot do this great Work for you, without your own Hand in the Business which relates to your Soul's Happiness; since an inspired Apostle assures you, you must, by Divine Assistance "work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling:" For no Man can redeem his Brother, nor give to God a Ransom for his Soul. I may (as I do earnestly) desire your Happiness, but I can't procure it for you. I may wish you Heaven, but I can't obtain it for you: Yet I earnestly pray, *That the God and Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom, and Revelation of the Knowledge of himself, whom (rightly) to know is eternal Life; that the Eyes of your Understanding may be enlighten'd, and that you may know what is the Hope of his Calling; and the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints;* and what the exceeding Greatness of his Power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty Power, by which he has vanquished and brought down all the strong Holds of Sin and Satan in the Hearts of them who confide in his mighty Arm, which is now extended over you for good; God has visited and called you often, and now waits to be gracious to you: The Almighty I say, has long visited and try'd you by his Mercy and Forbearance; He has spoke to you by the Voice of his Holy Spirit, which some of you have neglected, overlooked and quenched: Hath not Wisdom long utter'd her Voice, even at your Doors? Is she not come up into your Chambers? Does not Understanding cry in the most secret Recesses of your Consciences, saying, *How long, ye simple Ones, will you love Simplicity, and Scorners delight in Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledge? Turn you therefore at the Reproofs of Instruction, which is the Way to Life;* and then behold he will more abundantly pour out of his Spirit upon you; and if ye hearken and obey his Voice, he will make his Words and Will known to you; on the contrary, if you continue to refuse and rebel against his Light and Truth in your inward Parts, the Consequence is sure, He will certainly forsake and leave you to your own Delusions; because he hath call'd, and you refused; he hath stretched forth his Hand, and no Man regards; but have set at nought all his Counsel, turn'd his Word behind your Backs, and will hear none of his Reproofs.

Therefore unless you return and repent, with all your Hearts, and amend your Ways and your Doings, he will, when your Distress comes upon you, laugh at your Calamities, have you in Derision, and mock at all your Fears.

But I fervently pray, that this may never be your deplorable Condition; but that you may be, not only the Visited, but the Redeem-

ed of the LORD; not only the Called, but the Chosen of God! And, in order to make your Calling and Election sure, take to yourselves the whole Armour of God, that you may stand against the Wiles of the Enemy of your Soul's Happiness; *Having your Loins girt about with Truth, and having on the Breast-plate of Righteousness, and your Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel; but, above all, taking the Shield of Faith, whereby you'll be able to withstand and quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked One; and take the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word (or Power of God. Finally, Whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report; if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise; think on these Things and practise them. But we must remember, in all these Things, that GOD be our Alpha and Omega: His Love must be the Motive, and his Honour the End of all our Actions; and then the GOD of Peace will be with us, and bless us. To Him, and to the Word of his Grace, I commit and commend you, assuring you, my dear Fellow-mortals, that my fervent Desire and unfeigned Prayer, unto the GOD of my Life, for you all, is, that you may be saved!*

SOPHIA HUME.

Charles-Town in South-
Carolina, the 30th of the
Tenth Month, 1747.



DIVINE



DIVINE LOVE COMMEMORATED.

The AUTHOR unknown to me.

WHO can fathom the redeeming
Act of universal Love?
Human Thought, though ever teeming,
Yet will insufficient prove.

Holy Angels ever lauding
Of the great and wond'rous Scheme,
Seraphs, hymning and applauding,
Never can exhaust the Theme.

O! the Heighth and Depth! surprising!
O! the Length and Breadth, how great?
Generations past, and rising,
Will the Bliss participate.

Sure the Father's Love was burning,
To poor lost and helpless Man,
Anxious for his safe returning,
Laid the meditorial Plan.

Nor less was our SAVIOUR'S Merit,
 Who severe Obedience paid,
 Dy'd to obtain the Holy Spirit,
 For his Creatures Help and Aid.

Now, above, makes Intercession,
 That the penitential Mind,
 Who makes unreserv'd Confession,
 And reforms, may Pardon find.

Wretched Man, if such Carelessing
 Work not on thy brutal Heart;
 If thou spurn'st the heav'nly Blessing,
 Thou will not in it have Part.

Blame thy Conduct, charge not Heaven,
 On thy Head thy Blood will lie:
 Every Help to thee is given
 Suiting Man's free Agency.

Do not for a Moment's Pleasure,
 Forfeit this thy dear-bought Right
 To the Joy and endless Treasure,
 Which the Gospel brought to Light.

Use thy Reason, Grace assisting
 Every Faculty within;
 Thou shalt know a brave resisting
 All the deadly Powers of Sin.

Taste Religion's chaste Embraces,
 Faith with genuine Works adorn;
 Virtue has eternal Graces,
 Fresh and blooming ev'ry Morn.

All her Joys beyond expressing,
 Peace that yields a golden Crop;
 She's in Life the choicest Blessing,
 - And in Death the grateful Drop.

Wing thy Soul, and qualify her
 For the Converse held above;
 Tip thy Tongue, to join the Choir
 In melodious Strains of Love.

Utterly disclaiming Merit;
 Praise the *Father* and the *Son*,
 Jointly with the *Holy Spirit*,
 An Eternal THREE in ONE!

F I N I S



May O God thy blessed Spirit Enlighten us who are in darkness,
Liven us who are dead in Sin, Regenerate and Renew us when contrary
to God's Sanctification purifies us And when by thy blessed Spirit We are
turned from Sin to Righteousness, Let that Spirit dwell in us, Comfort
us and lead us in the way of truth and Holiness, May, he, be our guide
and Assistant in praying to God, Let his Spirit dwell within & bestow
upon us, that we may know all things, which are for our profit
May He witness the truth of our Adoration And shall us to the day of
Redemption That when we have finished the Work of faith and Labour
of Love &c that blessed Spirit May conduct us safe to that glorious
rest that remains for the people of God, to that desirable & pleasant
Land, that is now afar off And at the last day He will raise and
quicken our Mortal Bodies, that our whole persons being glorified
We may taste in Body as well as Soul the pleasures of that happy
Country to which Sin will never approach And where sorrow shall never
dwell May we then be waiting patiently for the coming of our Lord
Jesus Christ Who will conform us to the end, To whom, with the
Father and the Holy Spirit, three Divine persons, but one God
We live Evermore, Mortal and Immortal &c &c praise & honour

power and victory given, Wee deserve persons, but one yett
Thee King Eternall, mortall and invisible & Be praise & honour
and glory, might, Power and Dominion afforded & henceforth and
for Evermore AMEN
I sorrow seeing it hath pleased thee to command us to breivell that wee
may relieve our need Wee beseech thee of thy grace to blep our Labours
That thy blessing may extend unto us without which Wee are not able
to continue & May we always unworoly feel the fatherly care thou hast
over us And do thou O God strengthen us with thy Holy Spirit, that we
may faithfully travaill in our Office and Vocation without paine & doubt
And if it shall please thee to prosper our Labour Give us minds able
to helpe them that are in need According to that ability thou of thy
Mercy shalt give us Be Mercifull O Lord to our offences that O King
our debt is great, which thou hast forgiven us in Christ Jesus Markens
to Save thee and our Neighbour the more Be thou our Father, our
Captain and defender in all dangers, Succour us in all byalls and
temptations, Let thy mighty hand and outstretcht Arm be still our
defense, Thy mercy and loving kindness in Christ Jesus our Salvation
O thy true and Holy Word our instruction, thy grace & Holy Spirit
our Comfort and consolation unto the End and in the End AMEN